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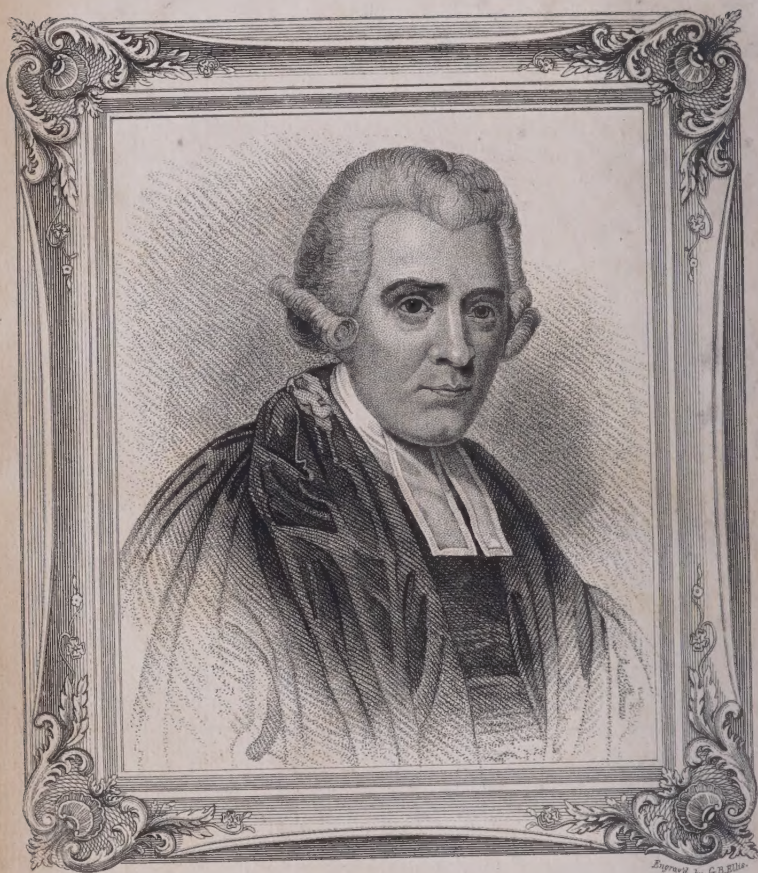






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The Rev.^d DAVID SIMPSON, A.M.

Published by M^c Carty, & Davis.

A
PLEA FOR RELIGION

AND THE
SACRED WRITINGS;

ADDRESSED TO
THE DISCIPLES OF THOMAS PAINE,
AND
WAVERING CHRISTIANS OF EVERY PERSUASION.

WITH
AN APPENDIX;
CONTAINING THE AUTHOR'S DETERMINATION
TO HAVE RELINQUISHED HIS CHARGE IN THE ESTABLISHED
CHURCH;
AND THE REASONS
ON WHICH THAT DETERMINATION WAS FOUNDED:

BY THE LATE REV. DAVID SIMPSON, M. A.
MINISTER OF CHRIST CHURCH, MACCLESFIELD.

He that believeth shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be damned.
JESUS CHRIST.

FROM THE SIXTH LONDON EDITION.

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PREFACE.

IT hath been said by the excellent Bishop Horne, that, "in times when erroneous and noxious tenets are diffused, all men should embrace some opportunity to bear their testimony against them." It will be allowed by every dispassionate observer, that if erroneous and noxious tenets were ever diffused among men in any age, they are eminently so in the present. I am so far, however, from considering this in the light of a misfortune to the general cause of truth, that I am persuaded purposes of the most important nature are to be answered by it, in the course of Divine Providence. But notwithstanding this persuasion, I have thought it my duty, in the following pages, to bear a decided testimony against some of the most pernicious of those errors which prevail among us, and to stand forward as an advocate in behalf of Religion in general, and the Sacred Writings in particular. If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?

One might suppose, prior to experience, Infidelity was a thing of so gloomy and uncomfortable a nature, that no man of the least decency of character could be found who would embark in the desperate scheme. But when we consider the many awful threatenings recorded in the Bible against persons of a certain description, the numerous passages *apparently* liable to very serious objections, the natural darkness of the human understanding, the perverseness of the human will, and the imperious calls of contending passions, we need not be surprized that a large proportion of irreligious characters, who have little hope from divine mercy, and much to fear from divine justice, should be induced to embark in any scheme, that is calculated to afford them present indulgence, and free them from apprehensions of future danger. Thomas Paine's deistical principles may buoy up the minds of persons of this character, while health and prosperity smile upon them, but they will generally fail us in seasons of adversity, and especially in the views of approaching dissolution.* Give me a Religion that will stand by me at all seasons, in prosperity and adversity, in sickness and in health, in time and eternity. I would not give a rush for Religion, which will only serve my turn when the sunshine of worldly favour illumines my steps, and fail me when I stand in the greatest need of its support. This is the case with Deism, as many have found to their extreme sorrow, when the eternal world drew near, and dawned upon their astonished sight. More than one of the unhappy Mutineers, who have lately been executed on board his Majesty's ships of war, found themselves in this awful predicament, as their fate approached. Corrupted by Paine's Age of Reason, when they conceived themselves free from danger, they gloried in their shame; but when the King of Terrors came to stare them in the face, they saw their folly, repented, believed, and trembled in the views of the eternal world. Different, indeed, was the conduct of many other of these unhappy men, some of whom were, apparently at least,

* "You have been used," said good Mr. M. Henry, a little before his death, to a friend, "to take notice of the sayings of dying men. This is mine, that a life spent in the service of God, and communion with him, is the most comfortable and pleasant life that any one can live in this world."

equally regardless of life or of death. So we read of multitudes of our fellow creatures both in our own and in a neighbouring country, who, set free from the salutary restraints of Religion, and the government of the Divine Being, by a daring and uncontroled spirit of Infidelity, destroy themselves, and rush into the presence of the Almighty without dismay.*

More reasonable and becoming surely is the conduct of those who, when brought to a sense of their sin and folly, fear and tremble before this Dread Sovereign. This seems to have been the case with the late Lord P——. This Nobleman after he turned Deist, took every opportunity to shew his contempt of Religion. The clergyman and parishioners of the place where his Lordship's seat in Northamptonshire stood, usually passed in sight of the house in their way to church. At the time of their going and returning, he frequently ordered his children and servants into the hall, for the vile purpose of laughing at and ridiculing them. He pursued this course for some time, but at length drew near the close of life. Upon his dying pillow his views were altered. He found, that, however his former sentiments might suit him in health, they could not support him in the hour of dissolution; when in the cold arms of Death, the terrors of the Almighty were heavy upon him. Painful remembrance brought to view ten thousand insults offered to that God, at whose bar he was shortly to stand; and conscience being strongly impressed with the solemnity of that day, he but too justly feared that the God he had insulted would then consign him to destruction. With his mind thus agitated, he called to a person in the room, and desired him "to go into the library, and fetch the cursed book," meaning that which had made him a Deist. He went, but returned, saying he could not find it. The Nobleman then cried with vehemence, that "he must go again, and look till he did find it, for he could not die till it was destroyed." The person having at last met with it, gave it into his hands. It was no sooner committed to him, than he tore it to pieces with mingled horror and revenge, and committed it to the flames. Having thus taken vengeance on the instrument of his own ruin, he soon after breathed his soul into the hands of his Creator.†

Affecting as this example is, that of a William Pope, of Bolton in Lancashire, is much more so. At this place there is a considerable number of deistical persons, who assemble together on Sundays to confirm each other in their Infidelity. The oaths and imprecations which are uttered in that meeting are too horrible to relate, while they toss the Word of God upon the floor, kick it round the house, and tread it under their feet. This William Pope, who had been a steady Methodist for some years, became at length a professed Deist, and joined himself to this hellish crew. After he had been an associate of this company for some time, he was taken ill, and the nature of his complaint was such, that he confessed the hand of

* The general practice of duelling, among the higher orders of society in this country, is a sure indication, that a spirit of Infidelity is alarmingly gone abroad. A Christian fight a duel? Impossible! True valour forbids it. And to mend the matter, upon the Lord's day too! Still more impossible! Every principle of his religion prohibits the impious deed.—How much pain of mind did not the conduct of a certain most respectable character give, to all the serious part of the nation, on a late unhappy occasion of this sort? Religion, good morals, sound policy, true patriotism, all forbid the unchristian encounter.—Stake *his* life against the life of a ————! Were we to act thus in common life, a state of confinement would be thought essentially necessary for our welfare, and the public good.—Can nothing be done, no measures be taken, to put a stop to this infamous practice, this national opprobrium?—Let those whom it concerns consider.

† See *Evang. Mag.* for June 1797, where it is declared this anecdote may be depended upon, as it came from the lips of a person who was present at the scene.

God was upon him, and declared he longed to die, that he might go to hell. many times praying earnestly for damnation. Two of the Methodist preachers, Messrs. Rhodes and Barrowclough, were sent for to talk and pray with the unhappy man. But he was so far from being thankful for their advice and assistance, that he spit in their faces, threw at them whatever he could lay his hands upon, struck one of them upon the head with all his might, and often cried out, when they were praying, *Lord, do not hear their prayers!* If they said, Lord, save his soul! He cried, Lord, damn my soul! often adding, My damnation is sealed, and I long to be in hell! In this way he continued, sometimes better, and sometimes worse, till he died. He was frequently visited by his deistical brethren during his illness, who would fain have persuaded the public he was out of his senses; which was by no means the case. The writer of this account saw the unhappy man once, but never desired to see him again. Mr. Rhodes justly said, He was full of the devil as he could hold. This melancholy business happened in the course of the present year, and made a great noise in the town and neighbourhood of Bolton.*

These are shocking instances of the dreadful effects of Infidelity upon the minds of our fellow-creatures, in those seasons when we stand in most need of support and consolation. If living witnesses to the truth and importance of Religion and the Sacred Writings† might have any consideration with such of my readers as are deistically inclined, I would produce many of the first characters of the age, from among all the contending denominations of Christians. The late Jacob Bryant, Esq. who was unquestionably one of the deepest inquirers into the original of things, and, NO PRIEST, hath not only written a treatise professedly to prove the authenticity of the New Testament, but hath also, in another of his learned investigations, made the following declaration in favour of these incomparable and invaluable writings:

“This investigation” (a work written to prove that Troy never existed) “I more readily undertook, as it affords an excellent contrast with the Sacred Writings. The more we search into the very ancient records of Rome or Greece, the greater darkness and uncertainty ensue. None of them can stand the test of close examination. Upon a minute inspection, all becomes dark and doubtful, and often inconsistent: but when we encounter the Sacred Volume, even in parts of higher antiquity, the deeper we go, the greater treasure we find. The various parts are so consistent,

* Mr. Rhodes has since published an account of the sickness and death of this unhappy man in the Methodist Magazine, for August 1798, which is one of the most affecting on record.

† It becomes every objector to the Sacred Writings to reflect, that “the moral and natural evils in the world were not introduced by the Gospel; why then must the Gospel be called upon to account for them, rather than any other religion, or sect of philosophy? If there never had been an Old Testament, never a New one, mankind would have been at least as corrupt and miserable as they are at present. What harm then have the Old and New Testament done to you, that you perpetually challenge them to account to you for the evil you suffer? You dislike perhaps the story of Adam and Eve, and can by no means digest the account of the Serpent’s tempting, and prevailing against our first parents: very well: let this account be laid aside, and what are you now the better? Is there not the same evil remaining in the world, whether you believe, or believe not the story of the fall? And if so, what account do you pretend to give of it? For if you pretend to any religion, you are as liable to be called to this account, as any professor or teacher of the Gospel. No body is exempt in this case but the Atheist: and his privilege comes from hence, that he has no account to give of any thing; for all difficulties are alike upon his scheme.”—*Sherlock on Prophecy*, p. 232.

that they afford mutual illustration; and the more earnestly we look, the greater light accrues, and consequently the greater satisfaction. So it has always appeared to me, who have looked diligently, and examined; and I trust I have not been mistaken.*

Various similar testimonies have been adduced in the course of the following work. Mr. Erskine's name is there mentioned with honour. But as he hath since come forward in a manner more direct and full in behalf of Religion and the Sacred Writings, I cannot do the religious reader a greater pleasure, or render the deistical one a more important service, than by presenting him in this place, with the substance of the speech which this celebrated orator delivered upon the trial of Williams, in the Court of King's Bench, for publishing Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason*, on the 24th of June, 1797, before Lord Kenyon and a special jury.

"Gentlemen! the defendant stands indicted for having published this book, which I have only read from the obligations of professional duty, and from the reading of which I rose with astonishment and disgust.—For my own part, Gentlemen, I have been ever deeply devoted to the truths of Christianity, and my firm belief in the Holy Gospel is by no means owing to the prejudices of education (though I was religiously educated by the best of parents,) but arises from the fullest and most continued reflections of my riper years and understanding. It forms, at this moment, the great consolation of a life, which, as a shadow, must pass away; and without it, indeed, I should consider my long course of health and prosperity (perhaps too long and too uninterrupted to be good for any man) only as the dust which the wind scatters, and rather as a snare than as a blessing.

"This publication appears to me to be as mischievous and cruel in its probable effects, as it is manifestly illegal in its principles: because it strikes at the best, sometimes, alas! the only refuge and consolation, amidst the distresses and afflictions of the world. The poor and humble, whom it affects to pity, may be stabbed to the heart by it: They have more occasion for firm hopes beyond the grave, than those who have greater comforts to ren-

* "When I was in camp with the duke of Marlborough," says this truly learned and respectable man, in another place, "an officer of my acquaintance desired me, upon my making a short excursion, to take him with me in my carriage. Our conversation was rather desultory, as is usual upon such occasions; and among other things, he asked me, rather abruptly, what were my notions about Religion. I answered evasively, or at least indeterminately, as his enquiry seemed to proceed merely from an idle curiosity: and I did not see that any happy consequence could ensue from an explanation. However, some time afterwards he made a visit at my house, and stayed with me a few days. During this interval, one evening he put the question to me again; and at the same time added, that he should be really obliged if I would give him my thoughts in general upon the subject. Upon this I turned towards him, and after a short pause told him that my opinion lay in a small compass: and he should have it in as compendious a manner as the subject would permit. Religion, I said, is either true, or false. This is the alternative: there is no medium. If it be the latter—merely an idle system, and a cunningly devised fable, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. The world is before us, let us take all due advantage, and choose what may seem best: for we have no prospect of any life to come, much less any assurances. But if Religion be a truth, it is the most serious truth of any with which we can possibly be engaged; an article of the greatest importance. It demands our most diligent enquiry to obtain a knowledge of it; and a fixed resolution to abide by it, when obtained. For Religion teaches us, that this life bears no proportion to the life to come. You see, then, my good friend, that an alternative of the utmost consequence lies before you. Make, therefore, your election, as you may judge best; and Heaven direct you in your determination!—He told me that he was much affected with the crisis, to which I brought the object of enquiry; and I trust that it was attended with happy consequences afterwards."

der line delightful. I can conceive a distressed but virtuous man, surrounded by children looking up to him for bread when he has none to give them, sinking under the last day's labour, and unequal to the next, yet till looking up with confidence to the hour when all tears shall be wiped from the eyes of affliction, bearing the burden laid upon him by a mysterious Providence which he adores, and looking forward with exultation to the revealed promises of his Creator, when he shall be greater than the greatest, and happier than the happiest of mankind. What a change in such a mind might not be wrought by such a merciless publication?"

"But it seems, this is an Age of Reason, and the time and the person are at last arrived, that are to dissipate the errors which have overspread the past generations of ignorance. The believers in Christianity are many, but it belongs to the few that are wise to correct their credulity. Belief is an act of reason, and superior reason may, therefore, dictate to the weak."

"In running the mind along the long list of sincere and devout Christians, I cannot help lamenting, that Newton had not lived to this day, to have had his shallowness filled up with this new flood of light."

"But the subject is too awful for irony. I will speak plainly and directly. Newton was a Christian! Newton, whose mind burst forth from the fetters cast by nature upon our finite conceptions—Newton, whose science was truth, and the foundation of whose knowledge of it was philosophy: Not those visionary and arrogant presumptions which too often usurp its name, but philosophy resting upon the basis of mathematics, which, like figures, cannot lie—Newton, who carried the line and rule to the utmost barriers of creation, and explored the principles by which, no doubt, all created matter is held together and exists."

"But this extraordinary man, in the mighty reach of his mind, overlooked, perhaps the errors which a minuter investigation of the created things on this earth might have taught him, of the essence of his Creator."

"What then shall be said of the great Mr. Boyle, who looked into the organic structure of all matter, even to the brute inanimate substances, which the foot treads on? Such a man may be supposed to have been equally qualified with Mr. Paine to look up through Nature to Nature's God. Yet the result of all his contemplation was the most confirmed and devout belief in all which the other holds in contempt, as despicable and drivelling superstition."

"But this error might, perhaps, arise from a want of due attention to the foundations of human judgment, and the structure of that understanding, which God has given us for the investigation of truth."

"Let that question be answered by Mr. Locke, who was, to the highest pitch of devotion and adoration, a Christian: Mr. Locke, whose office was to detect the errors of thinking, by going up to the fountains of thought, and to direct into the proper track of reasoning, the devious mind of man, by shewing him its whole process, from the first perceptions of sense to the last conclusions of ratiocination, putting a rein besides upon false opinion, by practical rules for the conduct of human judgment."

"But these men were only deep thinkers, and lived in their closets, unaccustomed to the traffic of the world, and to the laws which practically regulate mankind."

"Gentlemen! in the place where we now sit to administer the justice of this great country, above a century ago, the never-to-be-forgotten Sir Matthew Hale presided; whose faith in Christianity is an exalted commentary upon its truth and reason, and whose life was a glorious example of its fruits in man, administering human justice with a wisdom and purity drawn from the pure fountain of the Christian dispensation, which has been, and will be, in all ages, a subject of the highest reverence and admiration."

"But it is said by the Author, that the Christian Fable is but the tale of

the more ancient superstitions of the world, and may be easily detected by a proper understanding of the mythologies of the Heathens.*

"Did Milton understand those mythologies! Was he less versed than Mr. Paine in the superstitions of the world? No: they were the subject of his immortal song; and though shut out from all recurrence to them, he poured them forth from the stores of a memory rich with all that man ever knew, and laid them in their order as the illustration of that real and exalted faith, the unquestionable source of that fervid genius, which cast a sort of shade upon all the other works of man:

"He pass'd the bounds of flaming space,
Where angels tremble while they gaze:
He saw till blasted with excess of light,
He clos'd his eyes in endless night."

But it was the light of the body only that was extinguished; the celestial light shone inward, and enabled him to justify the ways of God to man. The result of his thinking was nevertheless not the same as the author's. The mysterious incarnation of our blessed Saviour (which this work blasphemes in words so wholly unfit for the mouth of a Christian, or for the ear of a Court of Justice, that I dare not and will not, give them utterance) Milton made the grand conclusion of the *Paradise Lost*, the rest from his finished labours, and the ultimate hope, expectation, and glory of the world:—

"A virgin is his mother, but his sire,
The power of the Most High; he shall ascend
The throne hereditary and bound his reign*
With earth's wide bounds, his glory with the heav'ns."

Mr. E. next entered most forcibly and deeply into the evidences of Christianity, particularly those that were founded on that stupendous scheme of prophecy, which formed one of the most unanswerable arguments for the truth of the Christian Religion. "It was not," he said, "the purpose of God to destroy free agency by overpowering the human mind with the irresistible light and conviction of Revelation, but to leave men to collect its truths, as they were gradually illustrated in the accomplishment of the divine promises of the Gospel. Bred as he was to the consideration of evidence, he declared he considered the prophecy concerning the destruction of the Jewish nation, if there was nothing else to support Christianity, absolutely irresistible. The division of the Jews into tribes, to preserve the genealogy of Christ; the distinction of the tribe of Judah, from which he was to come; the loss of that distinction when that end was accomplished; the predicted departure of the sceptre from Israel; the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem, which imperial munificence in vain attempted to rebuild to disgrace the prophecy; the dispersion of this nation over the face of the whole earth; the spreading of the Gospel throughout the world; the persecution of its true ministers, and the foretold superstitions which for

* "Piety has found

Friends in the friends of science, and true prayer
Has flow'd from lips wet with Castalian dews.
Such was thy wisdom, Newton, childlike sage!
Sagacious reader of the works of God,
And in his word sagacious. Such too thine,
Milton, whose genius had angelic wings,
And fed on manna. And such thine, in whom
Our British Themis gloried with just cause,
Immortal Hale! for deep discernment prais'd,
And sound integrity not more, than fam'd
For sanctity of manners undefil'd.

ages had defiled its worship." These were topics upon which Mr. Erskine expatiated with great eloquence, and produced a most powerful effect on every part of the audience.*

Lord Kenyon then, in addressing the Jury, among other important things, said, "I sincerely wish that the author of the work in question may become a partaker of that faith in revealed religion, which he has so grossly defamed, and may be enabled to make his peace with God for that disorder, which he has endeavoured to the utmost of his power to introduce into society. We have heard to-day, that the light of nature, and the contemplation of the works of creation, are sufficient, without any other revelation of the divine will. Socrates, Plato, Xenophon, Tully—each of them in their turns professed they wanted other lights; and knowing and confessing that God was good, they took it for granted the time would come when he would impart a farther revelation of his will to mankind. Though they walked as it were through a cloud darkly, they hoped their posterity would almost see God face to face. This condition of mankind has met with reprehension to-day. But I shall not pursue this argument; fully impressed with the great truths of Religion, which, thank God, I was taught in my early years to believe, and of which the hour of reflection and enquiry, instead of producing any doubt, has fully confirmed me in."

He that feels not conviction enough from these reasonings and authorities to make him pause, at least, in his deistical courses, is out of the reach of all ordinary means of conviction, and must be dealt with in some more fearful manner. I pray God that his conscience may be alarmed as with thunder—that the arrows of the Almighty may stick fast within him—that his soul may feel the terrors of hell following hard after him—that, like the unhappy person just mentioned, he may be made a monument of divine justice in the sight of all men—and that, like the celebrated Rochester, he may be finally snatched as a brand from the burning by the power of sovereign grace! May that blood which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel, and on which he now profanely and insolently tramples, be applied to his soul by the energy of the eternal Spirit. And may there be joy in the presence of the angels of God at his conversion, and heaven's eternal arches resound with hallelujahs at the news of a sinner saved!

Reader!

The author of this book, which is here put into your hand, cannot help being extremely alarmed for the safety of his friends in this day of abounding Infidelity, when he considers this declaration of Christ, that, Whosoever shall be ashamed of him, and of his Words, in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

It is impossible to add any thing to the weight of these words. The heart that is unappalled by them is harder than the nether mill-stone, and incapable of religious melioration.

When you have carefully perused the book two or three times over, if you think it calculated, in ever so small a degree, to impress the mind with conviction; have the goodness to lend it to your unbelieving neighbour, remembering the words of St. James: Brethren! if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know, that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his ways shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

* Though I greatly admire the defence of Mr. Erskine in this oration, I am not clear that the prosecution can be justified upon the genuine principles of Christian liberty.

If you are dissatisfied with what is here advanced, in favour of Religion and the Sacred Writings, by no means give up the cause as desperate; but do yourself the justice to procure Bishop Watson's Apology for the Bible, in answer to Thomas Paine, and his Apology for Christianity, in answer to Mr. Gibbon. They are books small in size, but rich in value. They discover great liberality of mind, much strength of argument, a clear elucidation of difficulties, and vast superiority of ability on this question to the persons whom he undertook to answer.

The best edition of the Apology for the Bible, which is the more popular and seasonable work of the two, is four shillings; but an inferior one may be had from any of the booksellers at the reduced price of one shilling.

Considering the sceptical spirit of the present age, and the danger young and inexperienced people are in of being seduced into the paths of irreligion; this, or some other antidote, ought to be in every man's hand, who has any serious concern, either for his own felicity, or that of his friends and neighbours.

DAVID SIMPSON.

MAGGLESFIELD, Sept. 12, 1797.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THIS second edition of the *Plea for Religion* is enlarged with a considerable quantity of fresh matter, and is more than double the size of the former.

The whole of the first edition is retained, with some trifling alterations, and several of its parts enlarged and improved.

The anecdotal additions are many and important, and, it is hoped, will be found to furnish a good degree of profitable amusement.

Remarkable deistical conversions, with instances of unhappy and triumphant dissolutions, are here also more numerous.

This edition is also considerably extended in the religious and practical part, and, the author trusts, not without advantage, as a lively and experimental sense of divine things upon the human mind, is vindicated from the charge of enthusiasm, and the vile aspersions of a world that lieth in wickedness.

The prophecies concerning Christ, and his church in these latter days, are treated pretty much at large, with a view to demonstrate the divine authority of the Sacred Writings.

Other arguments for the truth and authenticity of the Scriptures* are suggested, the most common objections stated and answered, and the whole rendered as concise and satisfactory as may be.

Mr. Paine's objections to the Bible are particularly considered, and brief answers returned. His abuse of the Sacred Writers is also noticed with the severity it deserves, and his ignorance and malignity exposed.

Many extracts from our most celebrated Poets are interspersed. This will be considered as an excellence by some, and an imperfection by others. The literary reader will call to mind, that several of the most valuable authors among the ancients have written in the same manner.—

*"A verse may catch him, who a sermon flies,
And turn delight into a sacrifice."*

A compendous account of the present state of church-preferments is introduced, besides a general view of the Dissenting congregations in this kingdom.

The present state of the Methodist societies in Great Britain, Ireland, America, and the West Indies is likewise noticed, with some account of the rise and meaning of that denomination of Christians.

Some shameful instances of non-residence, patronage, and pluralities of livings, now in existence among the Bishops and Clergy of the land, are here detailed, and strongly reprehended.

The articles and canons, the liturgy, and other public offices of our church are reviewed, and, in some respects, reformed. At the same time, most of

* Consult Simpson's Essay on the authenticity of the New Testament, in answer to Volney and Evanson: but more especially Jones's New and Full Method of settling the canonical Authority of the New Testament, 3 vols. octavo, a most learned, able, valuable, and decisive work, just reprinted by the University of Oxford, though written by a Dissenting minister: an instance of liberality not always to be met with. Can any good thing come out of Gath?

the defects in our ecclesiastical frame are confirmed by the opinions of some of our most learned and respectable writers.

If the author is thought severe upon the episcopal and clerical orders of men, let it be remarked, that he esteems them all very highly in love for their office's sake, because he is persuaded it is of divine appointment; and that, if at any time he has given way to his indignation, and expressed himself in strong terms against these orders, it is never intended to affect any but the culpable part of them; and that both the Prophets under the Old Testament dispensation, and Christ with his Apostles under the New have done the same. We cannot follow better examples.

"But, in a Plea for Religion and the Sacred Writings, where is the propriety of exposing the imperfections of the Church, with her Bishops and Clergy?"

Because the undiscerning world in general, and their deistical fellow creatures in particular, constantly unite them together, and wound the pure and immortal religion of Jesus Christ, and the Holy Scriptures, through their sides; whereas they are things essentially different. What has the character and gospel of Christ to do with the treachery of Judas, the cowardice of Peter, the ambition of James and John, the lukewarmness and worldly spirit of our Bishops and Clergy, or with the superstitious and secular appendages of the Church of Rome, the Church of England, or any other human establishment under heaven? They are things perfectly distinct. And if we mean to defend the Gospel to any purpose, it must be the Gospel alone, independent of every human mixture and addition. Corrupt churches and bad men cannot be defended.

The best part of the book, in the opinion of the author, is that, where he has enlarged upon the excellence and utility of the Sacred Writings. He confesses he is anxious to recommend them to the daily perusal of every man; because he is persuaded that both our present peace and future welfare very much depend upon the practice. He trusts, therefore, if all the rest of the book be rejected with contempt, this will be attended to with peculiar seriousness.

The reduction of the national religion to the pure standard of the Gospel, and the moral and religious reformation of all orders of men, are repeatedly insisted on, and with singular earnestness; as what alone in his judgment, can save us from impending ruin. This is done, because he is firmly persuaded, there can be no general spread of evangelical principles and practices, while the Hierarchy is in its present contaminated state, and the Bishops and Clergy continue in a condition so generally depraved. The good of his country is what he has exceedingly at heart, however much he may be mistaken in the means he thinks necessary to promote that end.

The missions to the Heathen are here spoken of with zeal and approbation. These noble efforts for the salvation of mankind, he believes to be one reason among others, why in the midst of abounding iniquity, our fate, as a nation, is, for a season, suspended.*

* Is it not an instance of the most unamiable bigotry that ever was exhibited in a Christian country, that when such generous, disinterested and noble efforts have been making for two or three years past, by various denominations of men, for the civilization and christianization of the South Sea islands, which are situated in the centre of some hundreds of millions of gross idolaters, scarcely one Bishop or dignified Clergyman of the Church of England; scarcely one Arian or Socinian congregation, those more opulent bodies of Dissenters; scarcely one Nobleman, and but very few rich Commoners appear to have contributed a single shilling out of their ample revenues towards promoting this expensive and god-like design?—The honour and blessedness of the glorious attempt is left to the poor?—Is not such a conduct among our great Ones speaking in the strongest of all language, that it is better the poor, misera-

The extravagances of the French governors are incidentally touched upon, and the vileness of their conduct, both towards their own people, and the neighbouring nations exposed.*

He has taken the liberty of mentioning a variety of books upon different subjects. Some of these he has particularly recommended; others are only inserted among those of the same class. Young readers may find their advantage in this part of his treatise.

Both believers and unbelievers, he trusts, will meet with something or another that will be useful to them. Whatever is conceived to be pernicious, they will do well to reject, remembering that we are enjoined by a very high authority, to prove all things, and hold fast that which is good.

Several other miscellaneous matters are interspersed through the whole, which he wishes may be both profitable and pleasant—*utile dulci*.

If any of his clerical brethren are so far offended at the freedom he has taken with his own order, or the established religion of his country, as to make a reply, he shall think himself at liberty to return an answer, or otherwise, as he may judge expedient. So far as the moral and religious conduct of the Clergy is concerned, the best answer to his charges will be, to correct and amend what is amiss. So far as the durability of the ecclesiastical constitution of the country is in question, he would refer his indignant reader, to the prophetic declarations of St. John, of the Old Testament.

Some repetitions will be found, and some mistakes discovered. The reader will have the goodness to excuse the former, and correct the latter.

Two Appendixes are subjoined, the former of which contains some farther thoughts on a national reform, and the latter, the author's reason for resigning his preferment in the religious establishment of the country, and declining any longer to officiate as a Minister in the Church of England.

To the whole is added a copious Index, whereby every thing most important may be turned to without loss of time.

If the author has advanced any thing that is wrong, uncharitable, unchristian, or unbecoming his station, in the course of these strictures, he is heartily sorry for it, and wishes it unsaid. Let him not, however, accept any man's person, neither let him give flattering titles unto man; for he knows not to give flattering titles; in so doing his maker would soon take him away. It has been, therefore his desire to speak the plain honest truth, as it appears to him, without courting any man's favour, or fearing any man's displeasure.

ble, benighted, Heathen nations should continue in their present deplorable condition, than that they should be brought out of darkness into the glorious liberty of the children of God, in any other way than that prescribed by them? Oh! shame to these several Orders of men. What a curse has not bigotry ever been to mankind?—Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbid him, because he followed not us, said the selfish and party-spirited Apostles. Forbid him not, replied the benevolent and liberal minded Saviour, for there is no man that can work a miracle in my name, who will lightly speak evil of me. I add, with the Apostle, if Christ is preached, and souls saved, I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice, whoever is the instrument.

*The difference between the English and French in point of piety is more than once noticed in the following pages. I observe here still further, in honour of the brave Admiral Lord Nelson, that the very next morning after the victory, August 2, 1798, while all must have been yet hurry and confusion, he issued the following Memorandum to all the Captains of his squadron.

“Almighty God having blessed his Majesty's arms with victory, the Admiral intends returning Public Thanksgiving for the same at two o'clock this day, and he recommends every ship doing the same as soon as convenient.”

Public thanks were accordingly returned at the hour appointed.

This solemn act of Gratitude to Heaven seemed to make a very deep impression upon the minds of several of the French prisoners, both officers and men.

sure. * He makes no question but a large number of good men are to be found both in the church established and out of it. Even the most despised of Sectarists, he conceives, are not wholly destitute. And, in his opinion, one such character is infinitely more estimable than a million of immoral Parsons, those most miserable and contemptible of all human beings, who contaminate every neighbourhood where they dwell; or ever so large a body of mere literary Clergymen, however extolled and caressed by the world, who, bloated with pride and self-importance, are a disgrace to the lowly spirit of the Saviour of mankind. To every truly pious and consistent Christian, literate or illiterate, he would give the right hand of fellowship, and bid him god-speed in the name of the Lord, wherever he is found. Clerical bigots, however, of every description, he most cordially pities and despises. They are despicable animals. Swollen with an imaginary dignity, they are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight lording it over the poor of Christ's flock, and binding heavy burthens upon them, and grievous to be borne, which they themselves will not move with one of their fingers. Such characters, whether found among Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, Quakers, or any other denomination of men,

* King George II. who was fond of the late Mr. Whiston, happened to be walking with him one day, during the heat of his persecution, in Hampton Court gardens. As they were talking upon this subject his Majesty observed, that "however right he might be in his opinions, it would be better if he had kept them to himself." "Is your Majesty really serious in your advice?" answered the old man. "I really am," replied the king. "Why then," said Whiston, "had Martin Luther been of this way of thinking, where would your Majesty have been at this time?"

"But why," enjoins the impatient reader, "why speak so freely and openly upon all these public abuses, at a time so critical as the present?"

Because I may never have another opportunity, and it is proper that somebody should speak. For the public abuses specified in these papers, he conceives must either be removed by the gentle hand of reform, or Divine Providence will take the matter into his own hand, and subvert them by the rough hand of a most implacable enemy. I speak these things under correction, and with the most benevolent wishes for the prosperity of my King and Country, and the universal spread of the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

† The wise ones of this world would do well to call to mind, who it is that hath said, That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God. Luke xvi. 15. Compare 1 Cor. i. 26-29. Men, sects, and parties, which are held in the highest estimation by the world, are usually, perhaps generally, held in the lowest estimation by God; and, on the contrary, men, sects, and parties, which are held in the lowest estimation by the world, are usually, perhaps universally, held in the highest estimation by the Almighty.

The way to heaven prescribed by the Scripture, and the way to heaven prescribed by worldly minded men, are as opposite to each other as the east to the west. The former saith, Strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. The latter say, Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth unto life, and many there be which go in thereat. Persons of this character are usually secure and confident, determined and resolute, merry and jovial, and perceive little or no danger even when they are dancing blind-fold on the brink of destruction. I remember somewhere reading of a genius of this sort, who, turning all serious godliness into ridicule and contempt, declared there was no need of so much ado, for if he had but time to say three words, "Lord save me," he did not doubt but he should go to heaven. Not long after, this same confident Gallio was riding a spirited horse over a bridge, upon which he met a flock of sheep; the horse took fright, leaped over the battlement into the river, where his rider was drowned, and the last three words he was heard to speak were, Devil—take—all. 'Tis dangerous to provoke a God!

are the Scribes and Pharisees of the day, to whom the great and inflexible Judge of the world, in just, but terrible, language, exclaimed, Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? To the author of these papers the praise or dispraise of such men is almost equally indifferent. But a liberal minded and benevolent soul, who embraces every human being in the arms of his charity, who rises superior to the superstitious tribe of infallible doctors—the *genus irritabile vulgus*: who can pierce through the guise of human distinctions and trace religious excellence among all orders and descriptions of men, he would clasp to his bosom, make him room in his heart, and give him a place in the attic story of his affections. He loves a generous soul, a noble spirit, with whom he can hold sweet converse* on things human and divine; trace the awful footsteps of a mysterious Providence,

“And justify the ways of God to man;”

while angels ministrant, attend the enraptured strains. — (“*O notes canaque Deum!*”)

From a melancholly dearth of such society, however, he is generally constrained to converse with the ancient and modern dead, those first of human beings, who have left us the image of their souls reflected in their immortal volumes. Here, he sometimes seems to catch a ray of their genius; to intermingle soul with soul; to taste the raptures of their sacred rage, and to meditate unutterable things. Oh! for a Spirit of burning, to refine these drossy natures; “a muse of fire,” to elevate his mind to their celestial strains; and a seraph’s wings to mount up to the blissful throng of the spirits of just men made perfect, around the throne of the great Father of the universe, and his Son, the Ever-blest!—Yet a little while, and these shadows shall flee away—these earthly tabernacles be taken down—these mortal bodies be clothed with immortality—the church militant be changed into the church triumphant—and the infinite Majesty of Heaven be seen without a veil, loved without a rival, and enjoyed without satiety through the long round of vast eternity!

DAVID SIMPSON.

Macclesfield, Jan. 1, 1799.

*The third chapter of Malachi seems to me to contain the most emphatical recommendation of religious conversation that ever was penned. Cicero too speaks with an air of indignation of men of talents meeting together and spending all their time in milking the ram, or holding the pail: “*Quasi vero clarorum virorum aut tacitos congressus, esse oporteat, aut ludicros sermones, aut rerum colloquia leviorum.*”

Academ. Quæst. lib. 4.

This brings to my mind an anecdote, which I have somewhere read concerning the immortal Locke, who being invited by a certain Nobleman to give the meeting to some of the most celebrated wits and scholars of the age, went in great expectation of enjoying a high intellectual repast. The card table being introduced after dinner, contrary to his expectation, he retired pensive and chagrined to the window. Enquiry being made if he was well, he replied, “He had come to give the company meeting in full confidence of receiving an uncommon degree of satisfaction in the conversation of such celebrated characters, and he must acknowledge he felt himself hurt at the disappointment.” The card table was immediately withdrawn, and a rich flow of souls begun, to his no small gratification.

A

PLEA FOR RELIGION,

AND THE

SACRED WRITINGS.

THERE are few ages of the world, but have produced various instances of persons, who have treated the Divine dispensations, either with neglect or scorn. Of these, some have persisted in their folly to the latest period of their earthly existence ; while others have discovered their mistake in time, and both sought and found forgiveness with God.—In most ages too, there have been some, who have piously observed the manifestations of Heaven ; who have cordially received the Holy Scriptures as a revelation from on high ; and who have built their everlasting expectations upon the salvation which is therein revealed. The hopes of such persons have never been disappointed. If they have lived up, in any good degree, to their religious profession, they have always been favoured with peace of mind, and strong consolation in life ; firm confidence in Christ, at the hour of death ; and have frequently gone off the stage of time into eternity rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, with unspeakable and triumphant joy. Examples of this kind, even among illiterate men, women and children, might be produced in numbers very considerable.—But how extremely different, most commonly, is the last end of those persons, who have denied and scorned the revelations of Heaven ; who have rejected the Sacred Writings : and treated serious godliness with sneer and contempt ;—Nay, it has frequently been known, that the first rate geniuses, and greatest men of their times, have left the world under much darkness of mind, full of doubts, and fearful apprehensions concerning the Divine favour, owing to their being deeply immersed in secular, or literary pursuits ; to their living beneath their Christian

privileges; and spending too small a portion of their time in devout retirement, and religious exercises. Nothing, indeed, can keep the life of God vigorously alive in the soul, but these exercises. Where they are either wholly neglected, or frequently interrupted, there the power of religion languishes. Faith and hope, peace and love, joy in, and confidence towards God, grow weak; doubts and fears, disquietude of mind, and scruples of conscience prevail. The sun goes down, and sets, to this world at least, under a dark and cheerless cloud.—But where the humble Believer in Christ Jesus (the eyes of his understanding being enlightened, and his fears alarmed with a sense of danger,) lays aside every spiritual encumbrance, and the sin by which he hath been often too easily overcome; where he resolutely breaks through every snare, and lives to the great purposes for which we were all born; where, with the illustrious philosopher and physician, Boerhaave, and the eminent statesmen, Sir John Barnard, the duke of Ormond, and Lord Capel*, he spends a due proportion of every day in private

* It was the custom of three of these great men, to spend an hour every morning, in private prayer and reading the Holy Scriptures; and of the fourth, to meditate half an hour every day upon eternity. This gave them comfort and vigour of mind to support the toil and fatigue of the day. Nay, we are told in the Life of the Duke of Ormond, that “he never prepared for bed, or went abroad in a morning, till he had withdrawn an hour to his closet.”

We might mention a considerable number of similar instances. John Lord Harrington, who died A. D. 1613, at the age of 22 years, was a young nobleman of eminent piety, and rare literary attainments. He was an early riser, and usually spent a considerable part of the morning in private prayer, and reading Sacred Writings. The same religious exercise was also pursued both in the evening and at mid-day.

Sir Harbottle Grimstone, Master of the Rolls, an eminent lawyer, a just judge, and a person of large fortune, who lived in the last century, “was a very pious and devout man, and spent every day at least an hour in the morning, and as much at night, in prayer and meditation. And even in winter, when he was obliged to be very early on the bench, he took care to rise so soon that he had always the command of that time, which he gave to those exercises.”

This brings to my mind the case of the late Colonel James Gardiner, who was slain at the battle of Preston Pans, A. D. 1745. This brave man used constantly to rise at four in the morning, and to spend his time till six in the secret exercises of devotion, reading, meditation and prayer. And if at any time he was obliged to go

prayer, meditation, and reading the Sacred Volume; there, with these truly valuable men, he usually hath large enjoyment of the consolations of religion, and abounds in peace, and hope through the power of the Holy Ghost. He goes through life, if not smoothly and usefully, at least contentedly and happily. While, in the eyes of those persons, who boast of their superiority of understanding, and freedom from vulgar prejudices, the Redeemer of the world becomes daily more and more contemptible; and in the eyes of the lukewarm Christian less and less desirable; in the estimation of the devout and lively Believer, who, by waiting upon the Lord, renews his strength, the Son of God, in his person, offices and work, appears with encreasing affection, the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. Being convinced of sin, and justified by faith, he has peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto him. He is strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man, and Christ dwells in his heart by faith. Being rooted and grounded in love, he comprehends with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and he knows the love of Christ; though indeed it passeth knowledge. He is, moreover, filled with all the communicable fulness of God, and a peace passing understanding keepeth his heart and mind through Christ Jesus.

“A Christian dwells, like Uriel, in the sun:
Meridian evidence puts doubt to flight;
And ardent hope anticipates the skies.”—YOUNG.

The language of the soul is, Whom have I in heaven but thee, O God! and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of thee. To do unto others as he would have them to do unto him, is the great law of his life, in all his dealings between man and man; and whereinsoever he falls

out before six in the morning, he rose proportionably sooner; so that when a journey, or march, has required him to be on horseback by four, he would be at his devotions at farthest by two.”

The same holds true of General Sir William Waller, who was as devout in the closet as he was valiant in the field.

Let the reader mark well, that none of these religious persons were either Monks or Parsons, but men of great consideration in the world, who were engaged in the most active scenes of life.

short of a full compliance with this royal statute, he laments and bewails his folly, makes satisfaction according to the nature of the case ; flees to the blood of sprinkling for pardon ; and returns with renewed vigour to the path of duty. Giving all diligence, he adds to his faith, virtue : and to virtue, knowledge ; and to knowledge, temperance ; and to temperance, patience ; and to patience, godliness ; and to godliness, brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness, charity. With zealous affection he cultivates the holy tempers which were in Christ ; bowels of mercy, lowliness, meekness, gentleness, contempt of the world, patience, temperance, long-suffering, a tender love to every human being, bearing, believing, hoping, enduring all things. He submits himself to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake ; whether it be to the King, as supreme ; or unto Governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well. He pays all due respect unto men of every rank and degree. He loves with peculiar affection the whole brotherhood of Believers in Christ Jesus.—He so fears God as to depart from evil, and so honours the king as to be ready, on every proper call, to sacrifice his life for the good of the public. He endeavours to acquit himself with propriety in every station, whether as master, servant, parent, child, magistrate, subject, teacher, learner. In short, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, to these he attends with the utmost diligence and assiduity. This is the Christianity, which the Son of God taught unto the world*. And he that is of this religion is my brother, my sister, and my mother, by what name soever he is distinguished and called.

* Dr. Robertson, our celebrated Historian, tells us, that " Christianity is rational and sublime in its doctrines, humane and beneficent in its precepts, pure and simple in its worship." And even Mr. Paine is constrained to confess, that " Jesus Christ was a virtuous and an amiable man ; that the morality which he preached and practised was of the most benevolent kind ; that though similar systems of morality had been preached by Confucius, and by some of the Greek philosophers many years before, and by many good men in all ages ; it has not been exceeded by any."—Important concession ! Where is the propriety then of endeavouring to

I do not say, however, that this is the religion of the great body of persons who call themselves Christians. Much otherwise. Many who are so called are extremely immoral. Others are guilty only of some particular vice. Some are decent in their general conduct, and pretty attentive to religious observances; but yet total strangers to inward religion. Great sticklers for their own party, be it what it may, they harbour a strong aversion to all who dare to think for themselves, and presume to dissent from them in principle or practice. So remote are they from the character and experience of the above evangelical requirements, that they consider them as delusive and enthusiastic. Something of the form of godliness they have gotten, but they deny, and sometimes even ridicule the power. Be this as it may, true religion is still the same; and the above is a scriptural sketch of it, whether we will hear, or whether we will forbear. So far too are real Christians from being ashamed of this gospel-method of saving a lost world, that they

explode the Gospel?—Thou art condemned out of thine own mouth!

Lord Bolingbroke has made confessions similar to this of Paine:—"No religion," says he, "ever appeared in the world, whose natural tendency was so much directed to promote the peace and happiness of mankind as Christianity. No system can be more simple and plain than that of natural religion, as it stands in the Gospel. The system of religion which Christ published, and, his Evangelists recorded, is a complete system to all the purposes of religion, natural and revealed. Christianity, as it stands in the Gospel, contains not only a complete, but a very plain system of religion. The Gospel is in all cases one continued lesson of the strictest morality, of justice, of benevolence, and of universal charity."

These are strange concessions from a professed Deist! And yet, strange as they certainly are, much the same have been made by Blount, Tindal, Morgan, Toland, Chubb, Rousseau, and most of our other real or pretended Unbelievers.

The truth is, all these deistical gentlemen could approve the morality, or some parts of the morality, of the New Testament but they could neither understand nor approve the grand scheme of redemption therein exhibited. Why! Because the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 1 Cor. ii. 14.—They were blind to all the glories of the Gospel scheme. They neither saw nor felt their need of such redemption as is therein exhibited. What wonder then if they spent their lives in opposing its gracious designs?

make it their boast and song all the day through in the house of their pilgrimage.

“ I'll praise my Maker with my breath ;
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler pow'rs :
My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
While life, and thought, and being last,
Or immortality endures.”

They experience its effect in raising them from the ruins of their fall. They lament with sincere contrition the sins and follies of their unregenerate state. They discover nothing but condemnation, while they remain under the covenant of works. They flee for refuge to the only hope of sinful men : and consider themselves as the happiest of God's creatures, in having this plank thrown out, on which they are permitted to escape safe to land. In the mean time, they feel this religion makes them easy, comfortable, happy ; and seems adapted with consummate wisdom to their state and circumstances.

“ Soft peace she brings, whenever she arrives,
She builds our quiet as she forms our lives :
Lays the rough paths of peevish nature ev'n,
And opens in each breast a little heaven.”

This is the portion of happiness, which the Gospel yields us while we live, and we have not the smallest fear that it will fail us when we die. On the contrary, we know, that our light affliction, in this world, which is, comparatively, but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory ; and that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*.

* “If there is one condition in this life more happy than another,” says a great author, “it is, surely, that of him, who founds all his hopes of futurity on the promises of the Gospel ; who carefully endeavours to conform his actions to its precepts ; looking upon the great God Almighty as his protector here, his rewarder hereafter, and his everlasting preserver. This is a frame of mind so perfective of our nature, that if Christianity, from a belief of which it can only be derived, was as certainly false as it is certainly true, one could not help wishing that it might be universally received in the world.”

Mr Pope has a declaration to bishop Atterbury to the same purport, which is worthy of memorial. “The boy despises the infant, the man the boy, the philosopher both, and the Christian *all*.”

“ Nothing on earth we call our own,
 But, strangers, to the world unknown,
 We all their goods despise :
 We trample on their whole delight,
 And seek a country out of sight,
 A country in the skies.”

If then the religion of Jesus Christ be a delusion ; it is, at least, a happy delusion ; and even a wise man would scarcely wish to be undeceived. He would rather be ready to say with the great Roman Orator, when speaking of the immortality of the soul :—“ If in this I err, I willingly err ; nor, while I live, shall any man wrest from me this error, with which I am extremely delighted*.”

If we wished to exemplify these observations, it would be no difficult matter to produce various very striking instances of persons, as well from the Sacred Writings, as from the history of these latter ages, whose conduct and character have been conformable to the above representations. But as the Bible is in every one’s hands, and may be consulted at pleasure, we will call the attention of the reader to a few instances of persons, who have been eminent in their way, during these latter ages only, and, some of them, even in our own times. These may be Dying Infidels—Penitent and Recovered Infidels—Dying Christians, who have lived too much in the spirit of the world—and Christians dying, either with great composure of mind, or, in the full assurance of faith.†

* “ Si in hoc erro, lubenter erro ; nec mihi hunc errorem, quo delector, dum vivo, extorqueri volo.”

Mr. Addison also very properly saith, when speaking of the immortality of the soul ;—“ If it is a dream, let me enjoy it ; since it makes me both the happier and the better man.”

Spectator No. 186.

† “ There is nothing in history,” says this elegant writer in another place, “ which is so improving to the reader as those accounts which we meet with of the deaths of eminent persons, and of their behaviour at that dreadful season. I may also add, that there are no parts in history, which affect and please the reader in so sensible a manner.”—*Spectator*, No. 289.

1.—*EXAMPLES OF DYING INFIDELS.*

"The wicked is driven away in his own wickedness"—Prov. xiv. 32.

"Horrible is the end of the unrighteous generation."—Wis. iii. 19.

1. Mr. HOBBS was a celebrated Infidel in the last age, who, in bravado, would sometimes speak very unbecoming things of God and his Word. Yet, when alone, he was haunted with the most tormenting reflections, and would awake in great terror, if his candle happened only to go out in the night. He could never bear any discourse of death, and seemed to cast off all thoughts of it.* He lived to be upwards of ninety. His last sensible words were, when he found he could live no longer, "I shall be glad then to find a hole to creep out of the world at." And, notwithstanding, all his high pretensions to learning and philosophy, his uneasiness constrained him to confess, when he drew near to the grave, that "he was about to take a leap in the dark."—The writings of this old sinner ruined the Earl of Rochester, and many other gentlemen of the first parts in this nation, as that Nobleman himself declared, after his conversion.

2. The account which the celebrated Sully gives us of young Servin is out of the common way. "The beginning of June, 1623," says he, "I set out for Calais, where I was to embark, having with me a retinue of upwards of two hundred gentlemen, or who called themselves such, of whom a considerable number were really of the first distinction. Just before my departure old Servin came and presented his son to me, and begged I would use my endeavours to make him a man of some worth and honesty; but he confessed he dared

* What an amiable character was the Heathen Socrates, when compared with this Infidel-Philosopher? Just before the cup of poison was brought him, entertaining his friends with an admirable discourse on the immortality of the soul, he has these words: "Whether or no God will approve my actions, I know not; but this I am sure of, that I have at all times made it my endeavour to please him, and I have a good hope that this my endeavour will be accepted by him."

Who can doubt, but the merits of the all-atoning Lamb of God were extended to this virtuous Heathen? How few professing Christians can honestly make the same appeal!—Besides Socrates seems to have had as firm a faith in a Saviour, then to come, as many of the most virtuous of the Israelitish nation.

not hope, not through any want of understanding or capacity in the young man, but from his natural inclination to all kinds of vice. The old man was in the right : what he told me having excited my curiosity to gain a thorough knowledge of young Servin, I found him to be at once both a wonder and a monster ; for I can give no other idea of that assemblage of the most excellent and most pernicious qualities. Let the reader represent to himself a man of a genius so lively, and an understanding so extensive, as rendered him scarce ignorant of any thing that could be known ; of so vast and ready a comprehension, that he immediately made himself master of what he attempted ; and of so prodigious a memory, that he never forgot what he had once learned ; he possessed all parts of philosophy and the mathematics, particularly fortification and drawing. Even in theology he was so well skilled, that he was an excellent preacher, whenever he had a mind to exert that talent, and an able disputant for and against the reformed religion indifferently. He not only understood Greek, Hebrew, and all the languages which we call learned, but also the different jargons or modern dialects. He accented and pronounced them so naturally, and so perfectly imitated the gestures and manners both of the several nations of Europe, and the particular provinces of France, that he might have been taken for a native of all or any of these countries ; and this quality he applied to counterfeit all sorts of persons, wherein he succeeded wonderfully. He was, moreover, the best comedian and greatest droll that perhaps ever appeared ; he had a genius for poetry, and wrote many verses ; he played upon almost all instruments, was a perfect master of music, and sung most agreeably and justly. He likewise could say mass : for he was of a disposition to do, as well as to know, all things ; his body was perfectly well suited to his mind, he was light, nimble, dexterous, and fit for all exercises ; he could ride well, and in dancing, wrestling, and leaping, he was admired ; there are no recreative games which he did not know : and he was skilled in almost all the mechanic arts. But now for the reverse of the medal : here it appeared that he was treacherous, cruel, cowardly, deceitful ; a liar, a cheat, a drunkard and glutton ; a sharper in play, immersed in every species of vice, a blasphemer, an atheist ; in a word, in him might be found all the vices con-

trary to nature, honour, religion, and society ; the truth of which he himself evinced with his latest breath, for he died in the flower of his age, in a common brothel, perfectly corrupted by his debaucheries, and expired with a glass in his hand, cursing and denying God."

It is evident from this extraordinary case, that "with the talents of an angel a man may be a fool." There is no necessary connection between great natural abilities and religious qualifications. They may go together, but they are frequently found asunder.

3. The honourable Francis Newport, who died in the year 1692, was favoured both with a liberal and religious education. After spending five years in the University, he was entered in one of the Inns of Court. Here he fell into the hands of Infidels, lost all his religious impressions, commenced Infidel himself, and became a most abandoned character, uniting himself to a club of wretches who met together constantly to encourage each other in being critically wicked. In this manner he conducted himself for several years, till at length his intemperate courses brought on an illness, which revived all his former religious impressions, accompanied with an inexpressible horror of mind. The violence of his torments was such, that he sweat in the most prodigious manner that ever was seen. In nine days he was reduced from a robust state of health to perfect weakness ; during all which time his language was the most dreadful that imagination can conceive. At one time, looking towards the fire, he said, "Oh ! that I was to lie and broil upon that fire for a hundred thousand years, to purchase the favour of God, and be reconciled to him again ! But it is a fruitless vain wish : millions of millions of years will bring me no nearer to the end of my tortures, than one poor hour. O eternity ! eternity ! who can properly paraphrase upon the words —for ever and ever !"

In this kind of strain he went on, till his strength was exhausted, and his dissolution approached ; when, recovering a little breath, with a groan so dreadful and loud, as if it had not been human, he cried out, "Oh ! the insufferable pangs of hell and damnation !" and so died, death settling the visage of his face in such a form, as if the body, though dead, was sensible of the extremity of torments.

It may be much questioned, whether a more affecting Narrative* was ever composed in any language, than the true history of this unhappy gentleman's last sickness and death. It is greatly to be desired, that men of all denominations would give it a serious perusal.

4. Mr. William Emmerson was, at the same time, an Infidel, and one of the first mathematicians of the age. Though, in some respects, he might be considered as a worthy man, his conduct through life was rude, vulgar, and frequently immoral. He paid no attention to religious duties, and both intoxication and prophane language were familiar to him. Towards the close of his days, being afflicted with the stone, he would crawl about the floor on his hands and knees sometimes praying, and sometimes swearing, as the humour took him†.—What a poor creature is man without Religion! Sir Isaac Newton died of the same disorder, which was attended, at times, with such severe paroxysms, as forced out large drops of sweat that ran down his face. In these trying circumstances, however, he was never observed to utter any complaint, or to express the least impatience. What a striking contrast between the conduct of the Infidel and the Christian!

5. Monsieur Voltaire, during a long life, was continually treating the Holy Scriptures with contempt, and endeavouring to spread the poison of Infidelity through the nations. See, however, the end of such a conduct. In his last illness he sent for Dr. Tronchin; who when he came; found Voltaire in the greatest agonies, exclaiming with the utmost horror—I am abandoned by God and man. He then said, Doctor, I will give you half of what I am worth, if you will give me six months life. The Doctor answered, Sir, you cannot live six weeks. Voltaire replied, Then I shall go to hell, and you will go with me! and soon after expired.

This is the Hero of modern Infidels! Dare any of them say—Let me die the death of Voltaire, and let my last end

* It has been sometimes called the *Second Spira*.

† This extraordinary man, by way of justifying his own irreligious conduct, drew up his objections to the Sacred Writings much in the same way as Thomas Paine; but it does not appear that they were ever laid before the public, as Thomas Paine's have been.

be like his? Wonderful infatuation! This unhappy gentleman occupies the first niche in the French pantheon! That he was a man of great and various talents, none can deny: but his want of sound learning, and moral qualifications, will ever prevent his being ranked with the benefactors of mankind, by the wise and good. Such a hero, indeed, is befitting a nation under judicial infatuation, to answer the wise ends of the Governor of the world. If the reader has felt himself injured by the poison of this man's writings, he may find relief for his wounded mind, by perusing carefully Findley's *Vindication of the Sacred Books from the Misrepresentations and Cavils of Voltaire*; and Lefanu's *Letters of certain Jews to Voltaire*. The hoary Infidel cuts but a very sorry figure in the hands of the Sons of Abraham.

Since the publication of the first edition of this little work, we have had an account of the last days of this extraordinary man by the Abbe Barruel, author of *The History of the French Clergy*. And it is so extremely interesting, that I will lay it before the reader in a translation of that gentleman's own words, taken from the *History of Jacobinism*, by the editor of the *British Critic*.

"It was during Voltaire's last visit to Paris, when his triumph was complete, and he had even feared he should die with glory, amidst the acclamations of an infatuated theatre, that he was struck by the hand of Providence, and made a very different termination of his career.

In the midst of his triumphs, a violent hemorrhage raised apprehensions for his life. D'Alembert, Diderot, and Marmontel, hastened to support his resolution in his last moments, but were only witnesses to their mutual ignominy, as well as his own.

Here let not the historian fear exaggeration. Rage, remorse, reproach, and blasphemy, all accompany and characterize the long agony of the dying Atheist. His death, the most terrible ever recorded to have stricken the impious man, will not be denied by his companions in impiety. Their silence, however much they may wish to deny it, is the least of those corroborative proofs, which might be adduced. Not one of the Sophisters has ever dared to mention any sign given, of resolution or tranquillity, by the premier chief, during the space of three months, which elapsed from

the time he was crowned in the theatre, until his decease. Such a silence expresses, how great their humiliation was in his death !

It was in his return from the theatre, and in the midst of the toils he was resuming in order to acquire fresh applause, when Voltaire was warned, that the long career of his impiety was drawing to an end.

In spite of all the Sophisters, flocking around him, in the first day of his illness, he gave signs of wishing to return to the God whom he had so often blasphemed. He calls for the priest, who ministered to him, whom he had sworn to crush, under the appellation of the *Wretch**. His danger increasing, he wrote the following note to the Abbe Gualtier :—" You had promised me, Sir, to come and hear me. I intreat you would take the trouble of calling as soon as possible."—Signed Voltaire. *Paris, the 26th Feb. 1778.*

A few days after this, he wrote the following declaration, in presence of the same Abbe Gualtier, the Abbe Mignot, and the Marquis de Villevieille, copied from the minutes deposited with Mr. Momet, notary at Paris :

" I, the underwritten, declare, that for these four days past, having been afflicted with a vomiting of blood, at the age of eighty-four, and not having been able to drag myself to the church, the Rev. the Rector of St. Sulpice, having been pleased to add to his good works, that of sending to me the Abbe Gualtier, a priest : I confessed to him ; and if it please God to dispose of me, I die in the Holy Catholic Church, in which I was born ; hoping that the divine mercy will deign to pardon all my faults. If ever I have scandalized the Church, I ask pardon of God and of the Church. Second of March, 1778." Signed Voltaire ; in presence of the Abbe Mignot, my nephew, and the Marquis de Villevieille, my friend."

After the two witnesses had signed this declaration, Voltaire added these words, copied from the same minutes :—" The abbe Gualtier, my confessor, having apprized me, that it was said among a certain set of people, I ' should

* It had been customary during many years, for Voltaire to call our blessed Saviour—the *wretch*. And he vowed that he would crush him. He closes many of his letters to his infidel-friends with the same words—*Crush the wretch!*

protest against every thing I did, at my death ; I declare I never made such a speech, and that it is an old jest, attributed long since to many of the learned, more enlightened than I am."

Was this declaration a fresh instance of his former hypocrisy ? for he had the mean hypocrisy, even in the midst of his efforts against Christianity, to receive the sacrament regularly, and to do other acts of religion, merely to be able to deny his Infidelity, if accused of it.

Unfortunately, after the explanations we have seen him give of his exterior acts of religion, might there not be room for doubt ? Be that as it may, there is a public homage paid to that religion in which he declared he meant to die, notwithstanding his having perpetually conspired against it during his life. This declaration is also signed by that same friend and adept the Marquis de Villevieille, to whom, eleven years before, Voltaire was wont to write, "Conceal your march from the enemy, in your endeavours to crush the Wretch."

Voltaire had permitted this declaration to be carried to the Rector of St. Sulpice, and to the archbishop of Paris, to know whether it would be sufficient. When the Abbe Gualtier returned with the answer, it was impossible for him to gain admittance to the patient. The conspirators had strained every nerve to hinder the Chief from consummating his recantation ; and every avenue was shut to the priest, whom Voltaire himself had sent for. The dæmons haunted every access ; rage succeeds to fury, and fury to rage again, during the remainder of his life.

Then it was that D'Alembert, Diderot, and about twenty others of the conspirators, who had beset his apartment, never approached him, but to witness their own ignominy : and often he would curse them, and exclaim : "Retire ! It is you that have brought me to my present state ! Begone ! I could have done without you all ; but you could not exist without me ! And what a wretched glory have you procured me !"

Then would succeed the horrid remembrance of his conspiracy. They could hear him, the prey of anguish and dread, alternately supplicating or blaspheming that God, against whom he had conspired ; and in plaintive accents

he would cry out, "Oh Christ! Oh Jesus Christ!" And then complain that he was abandoned by God and man. The hand which had traced in ancient writ the sentence of an impious and reviling king, seemed to trace before his eyes, Crush then, do crush the Wretch. In vain he turned his head away; the time was coming apace when he was to appear before the tribunal of Him whom he had blasphemed; and his physicians, particularly Mr. Tronchin, calling in to administer relief, thunderstruck, retire, declaring that the death of the impious man was terrible indeed. The pride of the conspirators would willingly have suppressed these declarations, but it was in vain. The Mareschal de Richelieu flies from the bed-side, declaring it to be a sight too terrible to be sustained; and Mr. Tronchin, that the furies of Orestes, could give but a faint idea of those of Voltaire*.

6. Mr. Addison mentions a gentleman in France, who was so zealous a promoter of Infidelity, that he had got together a select company of disciples, and travelled into all parts of the kingdom to make converts. In the midst of his fantastical success he fell sick, and was reclaimed to such a sense of his conduct, that after he had passed some time in great agonies and horrors of mind, he begged those who had the care of burying him, to dress his body in the habit of a *Capuchin*, that the

* Diderot and D'Alembert also, his friends and companions in Infidelity, are said to have died with remorse of conscience somewhat similar to the above.

This account of the unhappy end of Voltaire is confirmed by a letter from M. de Luc, an eminent philosopher, and a man of the strictest honour and probity.

Let the reader consult D'Alembert's account of the death of Voltaire in a letter to the King of Prussia, and his Eulogium at Berlin, where it is partly denied: but denied in such a way as to give strong reason to suppose his end was without honour. See King of Prussia's Works, vol. 12, p. 130—152; and vol. 13. p. 517.

Mr. Cowper, in his Poem on Truth, has alluded to the above circumstances in the character of this Arch-infidel:

"The Frenchman first in literary fame,
(Mention him if you please—Voltaire?—The same.)
With spirit, genius, eloquence supplied,
Liv'd long, wrote much, laugh'd heartily, and died:
The Scripture was his jest-book, whence he drew
Bon-mots to gall the Christian and the Jew.
An Infidel in health; but what when sick?
Oh then, a text would touch him at the quick!"

Devil might not run away with it : and, to do further justice upon himself, he desired them to tie a halter about his neck, as a mark of that ignominious punishment, which in his own thoughts he had so justly deserved.

7. The last days of David Hume, that celebrated Infidel, were spent in playing at whist, in cracking his jokes about Charron and his boat, and in reading Lucian, and other ludicrous books. This is a *consummatum est* worthy of a clever fellow, whose conscience was seared as with a hot iron ! Dr. Johnson observes upon this impenitent death-bed scene—"Hume owned he had never read the New Testament with attention. Here then was a man, who had been at no pains to enquire into the truth of religion, and had continually turned his mind the other way. It was not to be expected that the prospect of death should alter his way of thinking, unless God should send an angel to set him right. He had a vanity in being thought easy." Dives fared sumptuously every day, and saw no danger : but—the next thing we hear of him is—In hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments*!

* It is much to be lamented that a man of Hume's abilities should have prostituted his talents in the manner it is well known he did. With all his pretensions to philosophy, he was an advocate for adultery and suicide. The reader will find a sufficient answer to his sophistry in Horne's Letters on Infidelity, Beattie's Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth, in Opposition to Sophistry and Scepticism, and Campbell on the Miracles of Christ. See also some very just and striking reflections concerning Hume, in the Eclectic Review for February 1808.

Mr. Gibbon was one of the most respectable Deists of the present age, and more like Hume, in several respects, than any other of the opposers of Christianity. Very sufficient reasons, however, may be given for his Infidelity, without in the least impeaching the credit of the evangelical system. Mr. Porson, in the preface to his Letters to Mr. Archdeacon Travis, after giving a very high, and, indeed, just character of Mr. Gibbon's celebrated History, seems to account for his rejecting the Gospel in a satisfactory manner, from the state of his mind. "He shews," says this learned Gentleman, "so strong a dislike to Christianity, as visibly disqualifies him for that society, of which he has created Ammianus Marcellinus president. I confess that I see nothing wrong in Mr. Gibbon's attack on Christianity.† It proceeded, I doubt not, from the purest and most virtuous motive. We can only blame him for carrying on the attack in an insidious manner, and with improper motives. He often makes, when he cannot readily find, an occasion to insult our religion ; which he hates so cordially that

† This seems a culpable excess of candour amounting almost to indifference.

Mr. Gibbon says, "He died the Death of a Philosopher*! Bravo! Bravo! If Philosophers die in such a manner, may it be my lot to die like an old-fashioned and enthusiastic Christian!"

8. Of all the accounts which are left us, of the latter end of those, who are gone before into the eternal state, several are more horrible, but few so affecting as that which is given us, by his own pen, of the late all accomplished Earl of Chesterfield. It shews us incontestibly, what a poor creature man is, notwithstanding the highest polish he is capable of receiving, without the knowledge and experience of those comforts, which true religion yields; and what egregious fools all of those persons are, who squander away their precious time in what the world, by a strange perversion of language, calls pleasure.

"I have enjoyed," says this finished character, "all the pleasures of this world, and consequently know their futility,

he might seem to revenge some personal injury. Such is his eagerness in the cause, that he stoops to the most despicable pun, or to the most awkward perversion of language, for the pleasure of turning Scripture into ribaldry, or of calling Jesus an impostor. A rage for indecency pervades the whole work, but especially the last volumes.—If the history were anonymous, I should guess that these disgraceful obscenities were written by some debauchee, who having from age, or accident, or excess, survived the practice of lust, still indulged himself in the luxury of speculation; and exposed the impotent imbecility, after he had lost the vigour of the passions."

* Such are the opposers of Jesus and his Gospel!—Let us see how this sneering antagonist of Christianity terminated his own mortal career.

Eager for the continuation of his present existence, having little expectation of any future one, he declared to a friend about twenty-four hours previous to his departure, in a flow of self-gratulation, that he thought himself a good life for ten, twelve, or perhaps twenty years. And during his short illness, it is observable, that he never gave the least intimation of a future state of existence.—This insensibility at the hour of dissolution, is, in the language of scepticism, dying like a clever fellow, the death of a philosopher!

See Evans's Attempt to account for the Infidelity of Edward Gibbon, Esq.

Among all the numerous volumes that Mr. Gibbon read, it does not appear that he ever perused any able defence, or judicious explication of the Christian religion.—Consult his Memoirs and Diary written by himself. His conversion and reconversion terminated in Deism; or rather, perhaps, in a settled indifference to all religion. He never more gave himself much concern about it.

and do not regret their loss. I appraise them at their real value, which, in truth, is very low ; whereas those who have not experienced, always over-rate them. They only see their gay outside, and are dazzled with their glare ; but I have been behind the scenes. It is a common notion, and like many common ones, a very false one, that those who have led a life of pleasure and business, can never be easy in retirement ; whereas I am persuaded that they are the only people who can, if they have any sense and reflection. They can look back *oculo irretorto* (without an evil eye) upon what they from knowledge despise ; others have always a hankering after what they are not acquainted with. I look upon all that has passed as one of those romantic dreams which opium commonly occasions ; and I do by no means desire to repeat the nauseous dose, for the sake of the fugitive dream.—When I say that I have no regret, I do not mean that I have no remorse ; for a life either of business, or, still more of pleasure, never was and never will be, a state of innocence. But God, who knows the strength of human passions, and the weakness of human reason, will, it is to be hoped, rather mercifully pardon, than justly punish, acknowledged errors. I have been as wicked and as vain, though not so wise as Solomon : but am now at last wise enough to feel and attest the truth of his reflection, that all is vanity and vexation of spirit. This truth is never sufficiently discovered or felt by mere speculation : experience in this case is necessary for conviction, though perhaps at the expence of some morality.

“ My health is always bad, though sometimes better and sometimes worse ; and my deafness deprives me of the comforts of society, which other people have in their illnesses.—This, you must allow, is an unfortunate latter end of my life, and consequently a tiresome one ; but I must own too, that it is a sort of balance to the tumultuous and imaginary pleasures of the former part of it. I consider my present wretched old age as a just compensation for the follies, not to say, sins of my youth. At the same time I am thankful that I feel none of those torturing ills, which frequently attend the last stage of life ; and I flatter myself that I shall go off quietly, but I am sure with resignation. My stay in this world cannot be long : God, who placed me here, only knows when he will order me out of it ; but whenever he does, I shall willingly obey his

command. I wait for it, imploring the mercy of my Creator, and deprecating his justice. The best of us must trust to the former and dread the latter.

“ I think I am not afraid of my journey’s end ; but will not answer for myself, when the object draws very near, and is very sure. For when one does see death near, let the best or the worst people say what they please, it is a serious consideration. The divine attribute of Mercy, which gives us comfort, cannot make us forget, nor ought it, the attribute of Justice, which must blend some fears with our hope.

“ Life is neither a burden nor a pleasure to me ; but a certain degree of *ennui* necessarily attends that neutral state, which makes me very willing to part with it, when He who placed me here thinks fit to call me away. When I reflect, however, upon the poor remainder of my life, I look upon it as a burden that must every day grow heavier and heavier, from the natural progression of physical ills, the usual companions of increasing years. My reason tells me, that I should wish for the end of it ; but instinct, often stronger than reason, and perhaps oftener in the right, makes me take all proper methods to put it off. This innate sentiment alone makes me bear life with patience ! for I assure you I have no farther hopes, but, on the contrary, many fears from it. None of the primitive *Anachorites* in the *Thebais* could be more detached from life than I am. I consider it as one who is wholly unconcerned in it, and even when I reflect upon what I have seen, what I have heard, and what I have done myself ; I can hardly persuade myself that all that frivolous hurry and bustle, and pleasures of the world, had any reality, but they seem to have been the dreams of restless nights. This philosophy, however, I thank God, neither makes me sour nor melancholic : I see the folly and absurdity of mankind without indignation or peevishness. I wish them wiser, and consequently better than they are*.”

* Miscellaneous Works, vol. iii. passim.—The Letters of this celebrated Nobleman, which he wrote to his Son, contain positive evidence, that, with all his honours, learning, wit, and politeness, he was a thorough bad man, with a heart full of deceit and uncleanness. Those letters have been a pest to the young nobility and gentry of this nation. It may be questioned whether Rochester’s Poems ever did more harm. This celebrated nobleman was accounted, not only the most polite and well bred man, but the greatest wit of

This is the life, these are the mortifying acknowledgments, and this is the poor sneaking end of the best bred man of the age ! Not one word about a Mediator ! He acknowledges, indeed, his frailties ; but yet in such a way as to extenuate his offences. One would suppose he had been an old Heathen philosopher, who had never heard of the name of Jesus ; rather than a penitent Christian, whose life had abounded with a variety of vices.

How little and how poor is man, in his most finished estate, without religion ! Let us hear in what manner the lively Believer in Jesus takes his leave of this mortal scene :—I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight ; I have finished my course ; I have kept the faith ; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of

his time. Various *Jeux d'Esprit* are accordingly handed about, as having proceeded from him, on different occasions. The two following, which contain an allusion to the sacred writings, I will take the liberty of presenting to the reader.

Chesterfield being invited to dine with the Spanish ambassador, met with the Minister of France, and some others. After dinner, the Spaniard proposed a toast, and begged to give his Master, under the title of the *Sun*. The French ambassador's turn came next, who gave his under the description of the *Moon*. Lord Chesterfield being asked for his, replied, "Your Excellencies have taken from me all the greatest luminaries of heaven, and the *stars* are too small for a comparison with my royal Master ; I therefore beg leave to give your Excellencies, *Joshua* !"

The other instance is still more pertinent. The Earl being at Brussels was waited on by Voltaire, who politely invited him to sup with him and Madame C——. His Lordship accepted the invitation. The conversation happening to turn upon the affairs of England, "I think, my Lord," said Madame C——, "that the Parliament of England consists of five or six hundred of the best informed and most sensible men in the kingdom?"—"True, Madame ; they are generally supposed to be so."—"What then, my Lord, can be the reason that they tolerate so great an absurdity as the Christian religion?"—"I suppose, Madame," replied his Lordship, "it is because they have not been able to substitute any thing better in its stead ; when they can I do not doubt but in their wisdom they will readily accept it."

To have entered into a serious defence of the Gospel of Christ, with such a pert and flippant lady, would have been the height of folly : but such an answer as this, was better calculated to silence her, than a thousand demonstrations, which she would neither have been able nor willing to understand.

righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me at that day.

9. The sad evening before the death of the noble Altamont, I was with him. No one was there but his physician, and an intimate friend whom he loved, and whom he had ruined. At my coming in, he said ;

“ You and the physician are come too late.—I have neither life nor hope. You both aim at miracles. You would raise the dead !”

Heaven, I said, was merciful.—

“ Or I could not have been thus guilty. What has it not done to bless and to save me ?—I have been too strong for Omnipotence ! I plucked down ruin !” I said, the blessed Redeemer—

“ Hold ! hold ! you wound me !—This is the rock on which I split—I denied his name.”

Refusing to hear any thing from me, or take any thing from the physician, he lay silent, as far as sudden darts of pain would permit, till the clock struck. Then with vehemence ;

“ Oh, time ! time ! it is fit thou shouldst thus strike thy murderer to the heart.—How art thou fled for ever !—A month !—Oh for a single week ! I ask not for years ; though an age were too little for the much I have to do.”

On my saying, we could not do too much : that heaven was a blessed place—

“ So much the worse. ’Tis lost ! ’tis lost !—Heaven is to me the severest part of hell !”

Soon after I proposed prayer.

“ Pray you that can. I never prayed. I cannot pray—Nor need I. Is not heaven on my side already ? It closes with my conscience. Its severest strokes but second my own.”

His friend being much touched, even to tears, at this, (who could forbear ? I could not ;) with a most affectionate look, he said :

“ Keep those tears for thyself. I have undone thee.—Dost weep for me ? That’s cruel. What can pain me more ?”

Here his friend, too much affected, would have left him :

“No stay. Thou still mayest hope. Therefore hear me, How madly have I talked? How madly hast thou listened and believed? But look on my present state, as a full answer to thee, and to myself. This body is all weakness and pain: but my soul, as if strung up by torment to greater strength and spirit, is full powerful to reason: full mighty to suffer. And that which thus triumphs within the jaws of mortality, is doubtless, immortal.—And, as for a Deity, nothing less than an Almighty could inflict what I feel.”

I was about to congratulate this passive involuntary confessor, on his asserting the two prime articles of his creed, extorted by the rack of nature; when he thus, very passionately:

“No, no! let me speak on. I have not long to speak.—My much injured friend! my soul, as my body lies in ruins; in scattered fragments of broken thought: remorse for the past, throws my thoughts on the future. Worse dread of the future, strikes it back on the past. I turn, and turn, and find no ray. Didst thou feel half the mountain that is on me, thou wouldst struggle with the martyr for his stake, and bless heaven for the flames:—that is not an everlasting flame: that is not an unquenchable fire.”

How were we struck! Yet soon after, still more. With what an eye of distraction, what a face of despair, he cried out:

“My principles have poisoned my friend; my extravagance has beggared my boy; my unkindness has murdered my wife! And is there another hell?—Oh! thou blasphemed yet most indulgent, Lord God! Hell itself is a refuge, if it hides me from thy frown.”

Soon after his understanding failed. His terrified imagination uttered horrors not to be repeated, or ever forgotten. And ere the sun arose, the gay, young, noble, ingenious, accomplished, and most wretched Altamont expired*.

It is not easy for imagination itself to form a more affecting representation of a death-bed scene, than that of this noble youth.

10. “SIR,

I was not long since called to visit a poor gentleman, ere while of the most robust body, and of the

* See Young's Centaur not Fabulous.

gayest temper I ever knew. But when I visited him ; Oh ! how was the glory departed from him ! I found him no more that sprightly and vivacious son of joy which he used to be ; but languishing, pining away, and withering under the chastening hand of God. His limbs feeble and trembling ; his countenance forlorn and ghastly ; and the little breath he had left, sobbed out in sorrowful sighs ! His body hastening apace to the dust to lodge in the silent grave, the land of darkness and desolation. His soul just going to God who gave it : preparing itself to wing away unto its long home ; to enter upon an unchangeable and eternal state. When I was come up into his chamber, and had seated myself on his bed, he first cast a most wishful look upon me, and then began as well as he was able to speak.—“ Oh ! that I had been wise, that I had known this, that I had considered my latter end. Ah ! Mr.———, death is knocking at my doors : in a few hours more I shall draw my last gasp ; and then judgment, the tremendous judgment ! how shall I appear, unprepared as I am, before the all-knowing, and omnipotent God ? How shall I endure the day of his coming ! ” When I mentioned among many other things, that strict holiness which he had formerly so slightly esteemed, he replied with a hasty eagerness : “ Oh ! that holiness is the only thing I now long for. I have not words to tell you how highly I value it. I would gladly part with all my estate, large as it is, or a world to obtain it. Now my benighted eyes are enlightened, I clearly discern the things that are excellent. What is there in the place whither I am going but God. Or what is there to be desired on earth but religion ? ”—But if this God should restore you to health, said I, think you that you should alter your former course ?—“ I call heaven and earth to witness,” said he, “ I would labour for holiness, as I shall soon labour for life. As for riches and pleasures, and the applauses of men, I count them as dross and dung, no more to my happiness than the feathers that lie on the floor. Oh ! if the righteous Judge would try me once more ; if he would but reprieve, and spare me a little longer ; in what a spirit would I spend the remainder of my days ! I would know no other business, aim at no other end, than perfecting myself in holiness. Whatever contributed to that ; every means of grace ; every opportunity of spiritual improvement, should be

dearer to me than thousands of gold and silver. But alas! why do I amuse myself with fond imaginations? The best resolutions are now insignificant, because they are too late. The day in which I should have worked is over and gone, and I see a sad horrible night approaching, bringing with it the blackness of darkness for ever. Heretofore, woe is me! when God called, I refused; when he invited, I was one of them that made excuse. Now, therefore, I receive the reward of my deeds; fearfulness and trembling are come upon me; I smart, and am in sore anguish already; and yet this is but the beginning of sorrows! It doth not yet appear what I shall be; but sure I shall be ruined, undone, and destroyed with an everlasting destruction!"

This sad scene I saw with mine eyes; these words, and many more equally affecting, I heard with mine ears; and soon after attended the unhappy gentleman to his tomb*.

11. Mr. Cumberland, in the *Observer* gives us one of the most mournful tales, that ever was related, concerning a gentleman of Infidel principles, whom he denominates Anti-theus. "I remember him," says he, "in the height of his fame, the hero of his party; no man so caressed, followed, and applauded. He was a little loose, his friends would own, in his moral character, but then he was the honestest fellow in the world. It was not to be denied that he was rather free in his notions; but then he was the best creature living. I have seen men of the gravest characters wink at

* Extract of a Letter from Mr. Hervey to Beau Nash, Esquire, at Bath.

If the stings, lashes, twinges, and scorpions of a guilty conscience are so horrible while we continue in the body, what must they be when we are dislodged by death, and find that our damnation is sealed by the Judge Supreme! Let the lost soul in Shakespeare speak some little of future woe:

"But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison-house,
I could a tale unfold, whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul; freeze thy warm blood;
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres:
Thy knotted and combined locks to part,
And each particular hair to stand on end
Like quills upon the fretful porcupine:
But this eternal blazon must not be
To ears of flesh and blood."

his sallies, because he was so pleasant and so well bred, it was impossible to be angry with him. Every thing went well with him, and Antitheus seemed to be at the summit of human prosperity, when he was suddenly seized with the most alarming symptoms. He was at his country house, and (which had rarely happened to him) he at that time chanced to be alone ; wife or family he had none, and out of the multitude of his friends no one happened to be near him at the time of his attack. A neighbouring physician was called out of bed in the night, to come to him with all haste in this extremity. He found him sitting up in his bed, supported by pillows, his countenance full of horror, his breath struggling as in the article of death, his pulse intermitting, and at times bearing with such rapidity, as could hardly be counted. Antitheus dismissed the attendants he had about him, and eagerly demanded of the physician, if he thought him in danger. The physician answered that he must fairly tell him he was in imminent danger.—“ How so ! how so ! do you think me dying ? ” —He was sorry to say the symptoms indicated death.—Impossible ! you must not let me die : I dare not die : O doctor ! save me if you can.”—Your situation, Sir, is such, that it is not in mine, or any other man’s art to save you ; and I think I should not do my duty if I gave you any false hope in these moments, which, if I am not mistaken, will not more than suffice to settle any wordly or other concerns which you may have upon your mind.—“ My mind is full of horror,” cried the dying man, “ and I am incapable of preparing it for death.”—He now fell into an agony, accompanied with a shower of tears ; a cordial was administered, and he revived in a degree ; when turning to the physician, who had his fingers upon his pulse, he eagerly demanded of him, if he did not see that blood upon the feet curtains of his bed. There was none to be seen ; the physician assured him, it was nothing but the vapour of his fancy.—“ I see it plainly,” said Antitheus, “ in the shape of a human hand : I have been visited with a tremendous apparition. As I was lying sleepless in my bed this night, I took up a letter of a deceased friend to dissipate certain thoughts which made me uneasy. I believed him to be a great philosopher, and was converted to his opinions : persuaded by his arguments and my own experience, that the disorderly affairs of this evil world could not be administered

by any wise, just, or provident being ; I had brought myself to think no such being could exist, and that a life, produced by chance, must terminate in annihilation. This is the reasoning of that letter, and such were the thoughts I was revolving in my mind, when the apparition of my dear friend presented itself before me ; and unfolding the curtains of my bed, stood at my feet, looking earnestly upon me for a considerable space of time. My heart sunk within me ; for his face was ghastly, full of horror, with an expression of such anguish as I can never describe. His eyes were fixed upon me, and at length, with a mournful motion of his head—Alas, alas ! he cried, we are in a fatal error ! and taking hold of the curtains with his hand, shook them violently and disappeared.—This, I protest to you, I both saw and heard ; and look ! where the print of his hand is left in blood upon the curtains !”

Anatheus survived the relation of this vision very few hours, and died delirious in great agonies.

What a forsaken and disconsolate creature is man without his **God and Saviour !**

12. Rousseau has the honour of the second place in the French Pantheon. He was born at Geneva ; and, at a proper age, was bound an apprentice to an artist. During his apprenticeship he frequently robbed his master as well as other persons. Before his time was expired he decamped, and fled into the dominions of the king of Sardinia, where he changed his religion and became a Catholic. By an unexpected turn of fortune he became a footman ; in which capacity he forgot not his old habit of stealing. He is detected with the stolen goods ; swears they were given him by a maid servant of the house. The girl, being confronted with him, denies the fact, and, weeping, presses him to confess the truth ; but the young philosopher still persists in the lie, and the poor girl is driven from her place in disgrace.

Tired of being a serving man, he went to throw himself on the protection of a lady, whom he had seen once before, and who, he protests, was the most virtuous creature of her sex. The lady had so great a regard for him that she called him her little darling, and he called her mamma. Mamma had a footman, who served her besides, in another capacity, very much resembling that of a husband ; but she had a most tender affection for her adopted son Rousseau ; and, as she feared

he was forming connections with a certain lady who might spoil his morals, she herself out of pure virtue took him—to bed with her!—This virtuous effort to preserve the purity of Rousseau's heart had a dreadful effect on the poor footman, and so he poisoned himself.—Rousseau fell sick, and mamma was obliged to part with her little darling, while he performed a journey to the south of France, for the recovery of his health. On the road he dines with a gentleman, and lies with his wife. As he was returning back, he debated with himself whether he should pay this lady a second visit or not: but, fearing he might be tempted to seduce her daughter also, virtue got the better, and determined the little darling to fly home into the arms of his mamma; but alas! those arms were filled with another. Mamma's virtue had prompted her to take a substitute, whom she liked too well to part with, and our philosopher was obliged to shift for himself. The reader should be told that the little darling, while he resided with his mamma, went to make a tour with a young musician. Their friendship was warm, like that of most young men, and they were besides enjoined to take particular care of each other during their travels. They went on for some time together, agreed perfectly well, and vowed an everlasting friendship for each other. But the musician, being one day taken in a fit, fell down in the street, which furnished the faithful Rousseau with an opportunity of slipping off with some of his things, and leaving him to the mercy of the people, in a town where he was a total stranger.

We seldom meet with so much villainy as this in a youth. His manhood however was worthy of it. He turned apostate a second time, was driven from within the walls of his native city of Geneva, as an incendiary, and an apostle of anarchy and infidelity; nor did he forget how to thieve.—At last the philosopher marries; but like a philosopher; that is, without going to church. He has a family of children, and like a kind philosophical father, for fear they should want after his death, he sends them to the poor-house during his life-time!—To conclude, the philosopher dies, and leaves the philosopheress, his wife, to the protection of a friend; she marries a footman, and gets turned into the street.

This vile wretch has the impudence to say, in the work written by himself, which contains a confession of these his

crimes, that no man can come to the throne of God and say, *I am a better man than Rousseau**.

Notwithstanding the above unworthy circumstances, it must be owned that Rousseau's writings have great literary merit, but then they contain principles which might be expected from such a person. He has exhausted all the powers of reasoning, and all the charms of eloquence in the cause of anarchy and irreligion. And his writings are so much the more dangerous, as he winds himself into favour with the unwary, by an eternal cant about virtue and liberty. He seems to have assumed the mask of virtue, for no other purpose than that of propagating, with more certain success, the blackest and most incorrigible vice.

This was the man and the writer whom the Constituent Assembly held up to the imitation and even adoration of the poor deluded French populace. He and Voltaire, who never could agree in life, are placed by each other's side in death, and made the standard of French principles and religion to all future generations.

We have seen how Voltaire terminated his earthly career, we shall find Rousseau expiring with a lie in his mouth, and the most impious appeal to the Divine Being, that was ever made by mortal man.

"Ah! my dear," said he to his wife, or mistress, just before he expired; "how happy a thing is it to die, when one has no reason for remorse, or self reproach!"—And then, addressing himself to the Almighty, he said, "Eternal being! the soul that I am going to give thee back, is as pure, at this moment, as it was when it proceeded from thee: render it partaker of thy felicity!"

These twelve examples are such as give but little encouragement to any person, who has a proper concern for his own welfare, to embark, either in the atheistic or deistic schemes. In those cases, where conscience was awake, the unhappy men were filled with anguish and amazement inexpressible. And in those cases where conscience seemed to be asleep, there appears nothing enviable in their situation, even upon their own supposition, that there is no after-reckoning.

* The above account of this strange man is taken from his own Confessions, Peter Porcupine's Bloody Bucey, and the accounts published of his death.

If to die like an ass be a privilege, I give them joy of it ! much good may it do them ! May I die like a Christian, having a hope blooming with immortal expectations !

Let us turn from these horrible instances of perverted reason and take a view of some more promising scenes.

II.—EXAMPLES OF PERSONS RECOVERED FROM THEIR INFIDELITY.

“ If, sick of folly, I relent, he writes
 “ My name in heav’n.”

13. Charles Gildon, author of a book called the Oracles of Reason, was convinced of the fallacy of his own arguments against religion, and the danger of his situation, by reading Leslie’s Short Method with a Deist. He afterwards wrote a defence of Revealed Religion, entitled The Deist’s Manual, and died in the Christian faith.

14. The late Lord Littleton, author of the History of Henry the Second, and his friend Gilbert West, Esq. had both imbibed the principles of Unbelief, and had agreed together to write something in favour of Infidelity. To do this more effectually, they judged it necessary, first to acquaint themselves pretty well with the contents of the Bible. By the perusal of that book, however, they were both convinced of their error : both became converts to the religion of Christ Jesus : both took up their pens and wrote in favour of it* ; the former, his Observations on the Conversion of St. Paul ;

* Athenagoras, a famous Athenian philosopher in the second century, had entertained so unfavourable an opinion of the Christian religion, that he was determined to write against it ; but upon an intimate enquiry into the facts on which it was supported, in the course of his collecting materials for his intended publication, he was convinced by the blaze of evidence in its favour, and turned his designed invective into an elaborate apology, which is still in being.

The above Mr. West, writing to Dr. Doddridge on the publication of his Memoirs of Colonel Gardiner, ascribes his own conversion from a state of Infidelity, into which he had been seduced, to the care his mother had taken in his education. “ I cannot help taking notice,” says he, “ of your remarks upon the advantage of an early education in the principles of religion, because I have myself most happily experienced it ; since I owe, to the early care of a most excellent woman, my mother, that bent and bias to religion, which, with the co-operating grace of God, hath at length brought

the latter his *Observations on the Resurrection of Christ*; and both died in peace.

me back to those paths of peace from whence I might have otherwise been in danger of deviating for ever!"

Dr. Johnson tells us, that "Lord Littleton, in the pride of juvenile confidence, with the help of corrupt conversation, entertained doubts of the truth of Christianity; but he thought afterwards it was no longer fit to doubt, or believe by chance; and therefore applied himself seriously to the great question. His studies being honest, ended in conviction. He found that Religion was true, and, what he had learned, he endeavoured to teach, by *Observations on the conversion of St. Paul*; a treatise to which Infidelity has never been able to fabricate a specious answer." Two days previous to his dissolution, this great and good man addressed his Physician in these memorable words: "Doctor, you shall be my confessor. When I first set out in the world, I had friends who endeavoured to shake my belief in the Christian religion. I saw difficulties which staggered me, but I kept my mind open to conviction. The evidences and doctrines of Christianity, studied with attention, made me a most firm and persuaded believer of the Christian religion. I have made it the rule of my life, and—it is the ground of my future hopes."

The conversion of the Rev. John Newton, late Rector of St. Mary Woolnoth, in London, is also extremely remarkable. He was born of religious parents, and brought up in his younger years in a religious manner. The impressions of this kind seemed to be strong and deep. At length, however, the admonitions of conscience, which, from successive repulses, had grown weaker and weaker, entirely ceased; he commenced Infidel, and for the space of many months, if not for some years, he does not recollect that he had a single check of that sort. At times he was visited with sickness, and believed himself near to death; but he had not, like Mr. Paine in the same situation, the least concern about the consequences. He seemed to have every mark of final impenitence and rejection; neither judgments nor mercies made the least impression on him.

In this unhappy condition he continued a number of years, all the time improving himself under very unpropitious circumstances, in classical and mathematical learning. At the age of about twenty-three or twenty-four, however, it pleased God to call him by his grace, out of darkness and delusion into his marvellous light, and in due time, into the glorious liberty of the children of God. He has lived now for many years under the power and influence of religion, and has been an eminent instrument of good to many thousands of souls by his preaching and writings.

It is remarkable, that, in this case, also, a religious education seemed to be the remote means of his conversion, after all his wanderings from the path of duty.

An account may be seen at large, in his *Letters to the Reverend Dr. Haweis*, of this very extraordinary business. The Narrative is, at the same time, useful and entertaining.

15. Sir John Pringle, one of the first characters of the present age, though blessed with a religious education, contracted the principles of Infidelity, when he came to travel abroad in the world. But as he scorned to be an implicit Believer, he was equally averse to being an implicit Unbeliever. He therefore sets himself to examine the principles of the Gospel of Christ, with all caution and seriousness. The result of his investigation was, a full conviction of the divine origin and authority of the Gospel. The evidence of Revelation appeared to him to be solid and invincible; and the nature of it to be such as demanded his warmest acceptance.

16. Soame Jenyns, Esq. Member of Parliament for Cambridge, by some means had been warped aside into the paths of Infidelity, and continued in this state of mind several years. Finding his spirit, however, not at rest, he was induced to examine the grounds upon which his Unbelief was founded. He discovered his error; was led to believe in the Saviour of mankind; and wrote a small treatise in defence of the Gospel, entitled, *A view of the internal Evidences of Christianity*; a work worthy the perusal of every man who wishes to understand the excellency of the religion he professes.

17. Doctor Oliver, a noted Physician at Bath, was a zealous Unbeliever till within a short time of his death. Being convinced of his error, and the danger of his situation, he bewailed his past conduct with strong compunction of heart, and gave up his spirit at last, in confident expectation of mercy from God, through the merit of that Saviour, whom, for many years he had ridiculed and opposed. "Oh!" said he, "that I could undo the mischief which I have done! I was more ardent to poison people with the principles of irreligion and unbelief, than almost any Christian can be to spread the doctrines of Christ."

18. General Dykern received a mortal wound at the battle of Bergen in Germany, A. D. 1759. He was of a noble family, and possessed equal abilities as a minister in the closet, and a general in the field, being favoured with a liberal education. Having imbibed the principles of Infidelity, by some means or other, he continued a professed Deist, till the time he received his fatal wound. During his illness, however, a great

and effectual change was wrought upon his mind by the power of divine grace, and he died in the full assurance of faith, glorying in the salvation of Jesus, and wondering at the happy change which had taken place in his soul* !

19. John, Earl of Rochester, was a great man every way ; a great wit, a great scholar, a great poet, a great sinner, and a great penitent. His life was written by Bishop Burnet, and his funeral sermon was preached and published by Mr. Parsons. Dr. Johnson, speaking of Burnet's Life of this Nobleman, says, " The critic ought to read it for its elegance, the philosopher for its argument, and the saint for its piety."

His Lordship, it appears, had advanced to an uncommon height of wickedness, having been an advocate in the black cause of atheism, and an encomiast to Beelzebub. He had raked too in the very bottom of the jakes of debauchery, and had been a satyrist against religion itself. But when, like the prodigal in the Gospel, he came to himself, his mind was filled with the most extreme horror, which forced sharp and bitter invectives from him against himself ; terming himself the vilest wretch on whom the sun ever shone ; wishing he had been a crawling leper in a ditch, a link-boy, or a beggar, or had lived in a dungeon, rather than have offended God in the manner he had done.

Upon the first visit of Mr. Parsons to him on May 26th, 1680, after a journey from the West, he found him labouring under great trouble of mind, and his conscience full of terror. The Earl told him—" When on his journey, he had been arguing with greater vigour against God and Religion, than ever he had done in his life-time before, and that he had been resolved to run them down with all the argument and spite in the world ; but like the great convert, St. Paul, he found it hard to kick against God." At this time, however, his heart was so powerfully affected, that he argued as much for God and Religion, as ever he had done against them. He had such tremendous apprehensions of the Divine Majesty, mingled with such delightful contemplations of his nature and perfections, and of the amiableness of religion,

* See this extraordinary case more at large in De Coetlogon's Divine Treasury, p. 27.

that he said,—“ I never was advanced thus far towards happiness in my life before: though upon the commission of some extraordinary sins, I have had some considerable checks and warnings from within; but still I struggled with them, and so wore them off again. One day, at an atheistical meeting in the house of a person of quality, I undertook to manage the cause, and was the principal disputant against God and Religion; and for my performances received the applauses of the whole company. Upon this my mind was terribly struck, and I immediately replied thus to myself,—‘ Good God, that a man who walks upright, who sees the wonderful works of God, and has the use of his senses and reason, should use them to the defying of his Creator!’—But though this was a good beginning towards my conversion, to find my conscience touched for my sins, yet it went off again: nay, all my life long I had a secret value and reverence for an honest man, and loved morality in others. But I had formed an odd scheme of religion to myself, which would solve all that God or conscience might force upon me; yet I was never well reconciled to the business of Christianity; nor had I that reverence for the Gospel of Christ which I ought to have had.”

This state of mind continued, till the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah was read to him, together with some other parts of the Sacred Scriptures; when it pleased God to fill his mind with such peace and joy in believing, that it was remarkable to all about him. Afterwards he frequently desired those who were with him, to read the same chapter to him; upon which he used to enlarge in a very familiar and affectionate manner, applying the whole to his own humiliation and encouragement.

“ O blessed God,” he would say, “ can such a horrid creature as I am be accepted by thee, who have denied thy being, and contemned thy power? Can there be mercy and pardon for me? Will God own such a wretch as I am?”

In the middle of his sickness he said still farther:—“ Shall the unspeakable joys of heaven be conferred on me? O mighty Saviour, never but through thine infinite love and satisfaction! O never but by the purchase of thy blood!” adding—“ that with all abhorrence, he reflected upon his former life—that

from his heart he repented of all that folly and madness of which he had been guilty."

He had a strong and growing esteem for the Sacred Scriptures, and evidently saw their divine fulness and excellency; "For having spoken to his heart, he acknowledged that all the seeming absurdities and contradictions fancied by men of corrupt and reprobate judgments, were vanished; and the excellency and beauty of them appeared conspicuously, now that he was come to receive the truth in the love of it."

During his illness he had a hearty concern for the pious education of his children, wishing, "his son might never be a wit, one of those wretched creatures who pride themselves in abusing God and Religion, denying his Being or his Providence; but that he might become an honest man; and of a truly religious character, which only could be the support and blessing of his family."

One of his companions coming to see him on his death-bed, he said to him:—"O remember that you condemn God no more. He is an avenging God, and will visit you for your sins: and will, I hope, in mercy touch your conscience, sooner or later, as he has done mine. You and I have been friends and sinners together a great while, therefore I am the more free with you. We have been all mistaken in our conceits and opinions; our persuasions have been false and groundless; therefore I pray God grant you repentance."

When he drew towards the last stage of his sickness, he said, "If God should spare me yet a little longer time here, I hope to bring glory to his name, proportionably to the dishonour I have done to him in my whole past life; and particularly by my endeavours to convince others, and to assure them of the danger of their condition, if they continued impenitent; and to tell them how graciously God hath dealt with me."

And when he came within still nearer views of dissolution, about three or four days before it, he said, "I shall now die: but, Oh! what unspeakable glories do I see! What joys, beyond thought or expression am I sensible of! I am assured of God's mercy to me through Jesus Christ! Oh! how I long to die, and to be with my Saviour!"

For the admonition of others, and to undo as much as

was in his power, the mischief of his former conduct, he subscribed the following Recantation, and ordered it to be published after his death :

“ For the benefit of all those whom I may have drawn into sin, by my example and encouragement, I leave to the world this my last declaration ; which I deliver in the presence of the great God, who knows the secrets of all hearts, and before whom I am now appearing to be judged : That from the bottom of my soul I detest and abhor the whole course of my former wicked life ; that I think I can never sufficiently admire the goodness of God, who has given me a true sense of my pernicious opinions and vile practices, by which I have hitherto lived without hope, and without God in the world ; have been an open enemy to Jesus Christ, doing the utmost despite to the Holy Spirit of grace : and that the greatest testimony of my charity to such, is, to warn them in the Name of God, as they regard the welfare of their immortal souls, no more to deny his being or his providence, or despise his goodness : no more to make a mock of sin or condemn the pure and excellent religion of my ever-blessed Redeemer, through whose merits alone, I, one of the greatest of sinners, do yet hope for mercy and forgiveness. Amen.*”

20. We have an account of the conversion of another determined Deist to the faith of Christ, in six letters, from a Minister of the Reformed Church abroad, to John Newton, late Rector of St. Mary Woolnoth, London. He was born of religious parents, was brought up at school and university for the ministry, became eminent for his literary attainments, but lost all his religion, and commenced Deist. Proud of his

* The case of Sir Duncomb Colchester, a magistrate in the county of Gloucester, towards the close of the 17th century, was somewhat like this of Rochester. He was a gentleman of excellent parts, a generous spirit, and undaunted courage. Having, however, spent many years in sundry extravagancies, he was at length, by a long and painful sickness, brought to a very serious sense of the excellency of religion, and of his own great sin and folly in the neglect and contempt of it. He, accordingly, by way of making some small reparation for the mischief he had done by his wickedness, drew up an address to his friends and the public, somewhat like to the above of Rochester, signed by divers witnesses, and caused it to be read in two neighbouring churches, and spread abroad among all his friends and neighbours through the county, as extensively as he was able.

abilities and attainments, and trusting solely to his reasoning powers, he disdained to think with the vulgar, and was too wise in his own esteem to be instructed by Divine Revelation. But while he was unacquainted with God, he was guilty of secret impurities, and a stranger to peace. Like a ship in a storm, without rudder or pilot, he was hurried along by tumultuous passions, till he grew weary of life. In such a state of soul and at such a crisis, the light of heavenly truth broke in upon his mind. The Lord spake and it was done. The storm was hushed. The man was powerfully and unexpectedly changed. The servant of sin became the servant of Christ; and he now preaches with energy and success, the faith he before laboured to destroy*.

21. Captain John Lee, who was executed for forgery, March 4, 1784, became an Infidel, through reading the elegant, but sophistical writings of David Hume. Deeply, however, did he repent his folly, when he came to be in distressed circumstances. "I leave to the world," said he, in a letter to a friend the night before his execution, "this mournful memento, that however much a man may be favoured by personal qualifications, or distinguished by mental endowments; genius will be useless, and abilities avail but little, unless accompanied by a sense of religion, and attended by the practice of virtue."

22. Another Gentleman, whose name is concealed out of delicacy to his connections, was descended of a noble and religious family. His life was extremely irregular and dissolute, but his natural parts and endowments of mind so extraordinary, that they rendered his conversation agreeable to persons of the highest rank and quality. Being taken ill, he believed he should die at the very beginning of his sickness. His friend, with whom he had frequently disputed against the

* Similar to this instance, in some respects, is the case of the Rev. Thomas Scott, late Chaplain to the Lock Hospital in London. "I feel myself impelled to declare," says he, "that I once was not much more disposed to credit the Scriptures than Mr. Paine: and having got rid of the shackles of education, was much flattered by my emancipation and superior discernment. But twenty years, employed in diligently investigating the evidences and contents of the Bible, have produced in me an unshaken assurance that it is the Word of God."

existence of a God and the truths of revealed religion, came to visit him on the second day after he was seized. He asked him how he did and what made him so dejected?

“ Alas !” said he, “ are you so void of understanding, as to imagine I am afraid to die? Far be such thoughts from me. I could meet death with as much courage as I have encountered an enemy in the field of battle, and embrace it as freely as I ever did any friend whom I entirely loved : for I see nothing in this world that is worth the pains of keeping. I have made trial of most states and conditions of life. I have continued at home for a considerable time, and travelled abroad in foreign parts. I have been rich and poor. I have been raised to honour and reversed in a high degree. I have also been exposed to scorn and contempt. I have been wise and foolish. I have experienced the difference between virtue and vice, and every thing that was possible for a man in my station ; so that I am capable of distinguishing what is really good and praise-worthy, and what is not. Now I see with a clearer sight than ever, and discern a vast difference between the vain licentious discourse of a Libertine, and the sound argument of a true Believer : for though the former may express himself more finely than the latter, so as to puzzle him with hard questions and intricate notions, yet all amount to no more than the fallacy of a few airy repartees, which are never affected by sober Christians, nor capable of eluding the force of solid reason. But now I know how to make a distinction between them ; and I wish from the bottom of my heart I had been so sensible of my error in the time of my health : then I had never had those dreadful foretastes of hell which I now have. Oh ! what a sad account have I to give of a long life spent in sin and folly ! I look beyond the fears of a temporal death. All the dread that you perceive in me arises from the near approach I am making to an eternal death ; for I must die to live to all eternity.”

This unhappy Gentleman continued in this manner to bewail his past folly, atheism and infidelity, for forty days and then expired. His friend, however, took much pains with him to encourage his repentance, faith, and return to a proper state of mind ; the particulars of which would be too tedious to record in this place. At last, however, he was brought to entertain some hope, that the Redeemer of

mankind would take pity on his deplorable condition, pardon his sins, and rescue him from that everlasting destruction which awaits all such characters. He told his friend, therefore, that if he departed with a smile, he might hope for the best concerning him ; but if he should be seen giving up the ghost with a frown, there would be reason to fear the worst.

This was about three o'clock in the afternoon, and he lived till four the next morning. A little before he expired he was heard to speak these words softly to himself—"Oh? that I had possession of the meanest place in heaven, and could but creep into one corner of it." Afterwards he cried out four several times together—"O dear! dear! dear! dear!"—and near a minute before he expired, his friend perceiving him to look full in his face with a smiling countenance——

There we leave him till the resurrection morn*.

23. When Count Struensee, Prime Minister of the kingdom of Denmark, had been disgraced and imprisoned by his Sovereign for certain misdemeanors of which he had been guilty, he was brought from a state of Infidelity to a serious sense of his situation. He then declared, "The more I learn Christianity from Scripture, the more I grow convinced how unjust those objections are with which it is charged. I find, for instance, that all what Voltaire says of the intolerance of Christians, and of blood-shedding caused by Christianity, is a very unjust charge laid upon religion. It is easy to be seen, that those cruelties, said to be caused by religion, if properly considered, were the production of human passions, selfishness and ambition, and that religion served in such cases only for a cloak.—I am fully convinced of the truth of the Christian religion, and I feel its power in quieting my conscience, and informing my sentiments. I have examined it, during a good state of health, and

* It is impossible for any man to say with certainty whether the change, which seems to pass upon the human mind, upon these melancholy occasions, is real and saving, or only apparent and delusive. We have known various instances, where every symptom of genuine repentance has been exhibited upon a sick bed, but no sooner has health returned, than they have returned to folly with accelerated speed ; fulfilling the old Popish distich :

"When the Devil was sick, the Devil a Monk would be :
When the Devil got well, the devil a Monk was he!"

with all the reason I am master of. I tried every argument, I felt no fear, I have taken my own time, and I have not been in haste. I own with joy I find Christianity the more amiable, the more I get acquainted with it. I never knew it before. I believed it contradicted reason, and the nature of man, whose religion it was designed to be. I thought it an artfully contrived and ambiguous doctrine, full of incomprehensibilities. Whenever I formerly thought on religion in some serious moments, I had always an idea in my mind how it ought to be, which was, it should be simple, and accommodated to the abilities of men in every condition. I now find Christianity to be exactly so; it answers entirely that idea which I had formed of true religion. Had I but formerly known it was such, I should not have delayed turning Christian till this time of my imprisonment. But I had the misfortune to be prejudiced against religion, first through my own passions, but afterwards likewise by so many human inventions, foisted into it, of which I could see plainly that they had no foundation, though they were styled essential parts of Christianity. I was offended when God was always represented to me as an angry, jealous judge, who is much pleased when he has an opportunity of shewing his revenge, though I knew he was love itself; and am now convinced, that though he must punish, yet he takes no kind of delight in it, and is rather for pardoning. From my infancy I have known but few Christians who had not scandalized me by their enthusiasm and wickedness, which they wanted to hide under the cloak of piety. I knew indeed that not all Christians were such, or talked such an affected language; but I was too volatile to enquire of better Christians after the true spirit of religion. Frequently I heard sermons in my youth, but they made no impression upon me. That without Christ there was no salvation was the only truth which served for a subject in all sermons; and this was repeated over and over again in synonymous expressions. But it was never set in its true light, and never properly proved. I saw people cry at church, but after their tears were dried up, I found them in their actions not in the least better, but rather allowing themselves in every transgression, upon the privilege of being faithful believers. —He said he observed in St. Paul, a great genius, much wisdom, and true philosophy. The Apostles write extremely

well, now and then inimitably beautiful, and at the same time with simplicity and clearness.—The Free-thinkers extol the fables of *Æsop*, but the parables and narrations of Christ will not please them; notwithstanding they are derived from a greater knowledge of nature, and contain more excellent morality. Besides, they are proposed with a more noble and artless simplicity than any writings of the kind, among ancient and modern authors.”

24. Count Brandt, the companion of Struensee in guilt and misfortunes, with great freedom owned before me and others, that his imprisonment was the means of setting his soul at liberty; and he found his chains so little troublesome to him, that he would oftentimes take them up and kiss them.” “For,” said he, “when I believed myself to be free, I was a miserable slave to my passions; and now since I am a prisoner, truth and grace have set me at liberty.” He pitied the miserable condition of those who were under the yoke of unbelief and sin, which he himself had worn, and kept himself in it by reading deistical writings. He mentioned, among the rest, the works of Voltaire, to whom he owed very little that was good. He said he had spent upon his travels four days with this old advocate for unbelief, and had heard nothing from him but what could corrupt the heart and sound morals. He was very sorry for all this, but was much pleased that he had found a taste for the true Word of God; whose efficacy upon his heart, since he read it with a good intention, convinced him of its divine origin*.

It is usually said, that example has a more powerful effect upon the mind than precept. None can deny that these are respectable ones. They are such as every Deist and Sceptic in the kingdom should well consider, before he ventures his salvation upon the justness of his own principles. If equal danger, or if any danger attended our embracing the Christian scheme, the Unbeliever would be in a certain degree justified in withholding his assent to that scheme: but as all the hazard is on his side of the question, and none on the other, language furnishes no other words to express the extreme folly of treating religion with levity, much less with ridicule and contempt.

* See Dr. Hee's History of Count Enevold Brandt.

III.—EXAMPLES OF DYING CHRISTIANS WHO HAD LIVED IN THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD.

This shall ye have of my hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow.—Isaiah. i. 11.

25. Hugo Grotius is said to have possessed the brightest genius ever recorded of a youth in the learned world, and was a profound admirer, and a daily reader, of the Sacred Writings; yet after all his attainments, reputation, and labour in the cause of learning, was constrained at last to cry out, “ Ah! I have consumed my life in a laborious doing of nothing!—I would give all my learning and honour for the plain integrity of John Urick!”

This John Urick was a religious poor man, who spent eight hours of the day in prayer, eight in labour, and but eight in meals, sleep, and other necessities*.

Grotius had devoted too much of his time to worldly company, secular business, and learned trifles; too little to the exercises of the closet. This is forsaking the fountain of living waters, and hewing out to ourselves broken cisterns that can hold no water.

26. When Salmasius, who was one of the most consummate scholars of his time, came to the close of life, he saw cause to exclaim bitterly against himself. “ Oh!” said he, “ I have lost a world of time! time, the most precious thing in the world! whereof had I but one year more, it should be spent in David’s Psalms, and Paul’s Epistles!”—“ Oh! Sirs,” said he again to those about him, “ mind the world less, and God more!”

27. Dr. Samuel Johnson†, whose death made such a noise a few years ago, was unquestionably one of the first men of the age, and a serious Believer in Jesus Christ for many years before his death. Mixing, however, too much with men of

* Alfred the Great, King of England, who fought fifty-six battles with the Danes, many of which were gained by his own personal courage and great example, dedicated, with strict punctuality, eight hours every day to acts of devotion, eight hours to public affairs, and as many to sleep, study, and necessary refreshment.

† Dr. Johnson’s Life by Boswell appears to me one of the most entertaining narratives in the English language.

no religion, his mind was kept barren of spiritual consolation, and he was grievously haunted with the fear of death through his whole life. "The approach of death," said he to a friend, "is very dreadful. I am afraid to think on that which I know I cannot avoid. It is vain to look round and round for that help which cannot be had. Yet we hope and hope, and fancy that he who has lived to-day may live to-morrow." To another friend he said, "He never had a moment in which death was not terrible to him." On another occasion he declared in company at Oxford, "I am afraid I shall be one of those who shall be damned—sent to hell, and punished everlastingly." When this great man, however, actually approached dissolution, "all his fears were calmed and absorbed by the prevalence of his faith, and his trust in the merits and propitiation of Jesus Christ." He was full of resignation, strong in faith, joyful in hope of his own salvation, and anxious for the salvation of his friends. He particularly exhorted Sir Joshua Reynolds, on his dying bed, "to read the Bible, and to keep holy the Sabbath-day." The last words he was heard to speak were, "God bless you!"

28. Baron Haller, a famous Swiss Physician, the delight and ornament of his country, was at the same time a great philosopher, a profound politician, an agreeable poet, and more particularly famous for his skill in botany, anatomy, and physic. During his last sickness he had the honour of a visit from Joseph, the late Emperor of Germany. Upon his death-bed, owing probably to the variety of his literary pursuits, the multiplicity of his engagements, and the honours heaped upon him by the world, he went through sore conflicts of spirit concerning his interest in the salvation of the Redeemer. His mind was clouded, and his soul destitute of comfort. In his last moments, however, he expressed renewed confidence in God's mercy through Christ, and left the world in peace.

29. Sir John Mason, on his death-bed, spoke to those about him in the manner following:—"I have lived to see five princes, and have been privy-counsellor to four of them. I have seen the most remarkable things in foreign parts, and have been present at most state transactions for thirty years together; and I have learnt this after so many years experi-

ence—That seriousness is the greatest wisdom, temperance the best physic, and a good conscience the best estate. And, were I live to again, I would change the court for a cloister; my privy counsellor's bustle for a hermit's retirement, and the whole life I have lived in the palace for an hour's enjoyment of God in the chapel*.”

30. Philip the Third, King of Spain, when he drew near the end of his days, expressed his deep regret for a careless and worldly life in the following emphatical words:—“ Ah! how happy would it have been for me had I spent these twenty-three years, that I have held my kingdom, in a retirement!”

31. Cardinal Mazarine, one of the greatest statesmen in Europe, cried out a little before his death with astonishment and tears:—“ Oh! my poor soul! what will become of thee? Whither wilt thou go? Were I to live again I would be a capuchin rather than a courtier.”

32. George Villiers, the younger, Duke of Buckingham, was the richest man, and one of the greatest wits in the

* James, Earl of Marlborough, who was killed in a battle at sea on the coast of Holland, A. D. 1665, having a kind of presentiment of his own death, wrote to his friend Sir Hugh Pollard a letter, of which the following is an extract:—“ I will not speak aught of the vanity of this world; your own age and experience will save that labour; but there is a certain thing that goeth up and down the world, called Religion, dressed and pretended fantastically, and to purposes bad enough, which yet by such evil dealing loseth not its being. Moreover, God in his infinite mercy hath given us his Holy Word, in which, as there are many things hard to be understood, so there is enough plain and easy to quiet our minds, and direct us concerning our future being. I confess to God and you, I have been a great neglecter, and I fear, a despiser of it. God, of his infinite mercy, pardon me the dreadful fault. But when I retired myself from the noise and deceitful vanity of the world, I found no comfort in any other resolution than what I had from thence. I commend from the bottom of my heart, the same to your happy use. Dear Sir Hugh, let us be more generous than to believe we die as the beasts that perish; but with a Christian, manly, brave resolution, look to what is eternal. I will not trouble you further. Shew this letter to my friends, and to whom you please. The only great God, and holy God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, direct you to a happy end of your life, and send us a joyful resurrection. So prays your true friend,

MARLBOROUGH.”

court of Charles II. ; and yet such were his vices and extravagancies, that before he died, he was reduced to poverty and general contempt. In this situation, however, he seems to have been brought to a sense of his folly, and the danger of his condition, from the letter which he wrote to Dr. Barlow, of whom he had a high opinion*, on his death-bed ; and which is well worth the attention of every man of pleasure and dissipation.

“ DEAR DOCTOR,

“ I always looked upon you as a man of true virtue ; and know you to be a person of sound judgment. For, however I may act in opposition to the principles of religion, or the dictates of reason, I can honestly assure you I had always the highest veneration for both. The world and I may shake hands, for I dare affirm we are heartily weary of each other. O Doctor, what a prodigal have I been of the most valuable of all possessions,—Time ! I have squandered it away with a persuasion it was lasting : and now, when a few days would be worth a hetacomb of worlds, I cannot flatter myself with a prospect of half a dozen hours.

“ How despicable is that man who never prays to his God, but in the time of his distress ! In what manner can he supplicate that omnipotent Being in his affliction with reverence, whom, in the tide of his prosperity, he never remembered with dread ? Do not brand me with infidelity, when I tell you I am almost ashamed to offer up my petitions to the throne of grace ; or of imploring that divine mercy in the next world which I have so scandalously abused in this. Shall ingratitude to man be looked on as the blackest of crimes, and not ingratitude to God ? Shall an insult offered to the king be looked on in the most offensive light ; and yet no notice taken when the King of kings is treated with indignity and disrespect ?

“ The companions of my former libertinism would scarce believe their eyes, were you to shew them this epistle. They would laugh at me as a dreaming enthusiast, or pity me as a timorous wretch, who was shocked at the appearance of futurity. They are more entitled to my pity than my resent-

* This appears in a very strong light from the anecdote which is recorded concerning the Doctor's preaching before King Charles the Second, and the Duke's severe address to him.

ment. A future state may very well strike terror into any man who has not acted well in this life ; and he must have an uncommon share of courage indeed, who does not shrink at the presence of God.

“ You see, my dear Doctor, the apprehensions of death will soon bring the most profligate to a proper use of their understanding. I am haunted by remorse, despised by my acquaintance, and, I fear, forsaken by my God. There is nothing so dangerous, my dear Doctor, as extraordinary abilities. I can not be accused of vanity now, by being sensible that I was once possessed of uncommon qualifications ; as I sincerely regret that I was ever blessed with any at all. My rank in life still made these accomplishments more conspicuous ; and, fascinated with the general applause which they procured, I never considered about the proper means by which they should be displayed. Hence, to purchase a smile from a blockhead, whom I despised, I have frequently treated the virtuous with disrespect ; and sported with the holy name of Heaven, to obtain a laugh from a parcel of fools, who were entitled to nothing but my contempt.

“ Your men of wit, my dear Doctor, look on themselves as discharged from the duties of religion ; and confine the doctrines of the Gospel to people of meaner understandings ; and look on that man to be of a narrow genius who studies to be good. What a pity that the Holy writings are not made the criterion of true judgment ! Favour me, my dear Doctor, with a visit as soon as possible. Writing to you gives me some ease, I am of opinion this is the last visit I shall ever solicit from you. My distemper is powerful. Come and pray for the departing spirit of the unhappy—BUCKINGHAM*.”

* This Nobleman is described to have been a gay, capricious person, of some wit, and great vivacity. He was the minister of riot, and counsellor of infamous practices ; the slave of intemperance, a pretended Atheist, without honour or principle, œconomy or discretion. At last, deserted by all his friends, and despised by all the world, he died in the greatest want and obscurity. It is of him that Mr. Pope says :

“ In the worst inn’s worst room, with mat half hung,
With floor of plaister, and the walls of dung—
Great Villiers lies. Alas ! how chang’d from him ;
That life of pleasure, and that soul of whim !—
No wit to flatter left of all his store !
No fool to laugh at, which he valued more !

33. We have also an uncommon alarm given us in a Letter from another Nobleman, but whose name is concealed from motives of delicacy, on his death-bed, to an intimate companion ; which no man can seriously read, and not find himself deeply affected. I will produce it at length.

“DEAR SIR,

“Before you receive this, my final state will be determined by the Judge of all the earth. In a few days at most, perhaps in a few hours, the inevitable sentence will be past,

There, victor of his health, of fortune, friends
And fame, this Lord of useless thousands ends.”

Mr. Dryden describes this Nobleman as being—

“A man so various, that he seem’d to be
Not one, but all mankind’s epitome :
Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong ;
Was every thing by starts, and nothing long ;
But, in the course of one revolving moon,
Was chymist, fidler, statesman and buffoon :
Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking ;
Besides ten thousand freaks that died in thinking.”

Wentworth Dillon, Earl of Roscommon, contemporary with Buckingham. was also a man of considerable learning and abilities, but a man of dissipation and licentious principles. He addicted himself immoderately to gaming, by which he was engaged in frequent quarrels, and brought into no little distress. But, however we may be disposed to play the devil when we are in no apparent danger, there is a time coming, when we shall all see things in a more serious point of view. Accordingly, we are told, at the moment this merry nobleman expired, he was constrained to utter, with an energy of voice, that expressed the most ardent devotion—

“My God, my Father, and my friend,
Do not forsake me in the end !”

Something like the case of Buckingham and Roscommon likewise, was the last scene of John Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, who died in the reign of George the First, if we may credit the lines inscribed by his own order on his monument—

“Dubius, sed non improbus vixi.
Incertus morior, non perturbatus.
Humanum est nescire et errare.
Christum adveneror, Deo confido.
Ens Entium, miserere mei !”

Sir Richard Steel hath given us another affecting confession of a dying Infidel, in No. LXXXI. of the Guardian ; and a humorous account of two other gentlemen of the same cast in Nos. CXI. and CXXXV. of the Tatler, which the reader may consult at his pleasure.

that shall raise me to the heights of happiness, or sink me to the depths of misery. While you read these lines, I shall be either groaning under the agonies of absolute despair, or triumphing in fulness of joy.

“It is impossible for me to express the present disposition of my soul—the vast uncertainty I am struggling with! No words can paint the force and vivacity of my apprehensions. Every doubt wears the face of horror, and would perfectly overwhelm me, but for some faint beams of hope, which dart across the tremendous gloom! What tongue can utter the anguish of a soul suspended between the extremes of infinite joy and external misery? I am throwing my last stake for eternity, and tremble and shudder for the important event.

“Good God! how have I employed myself! what enchantment hath held me? In what delirium has my life been past? What have I been doing, while the sun in its race and the stars in their courses, have lent their beams, perhaps only to light me to perdition.

“I never awaked till now. I have but just commenced the dignity of a rational being. Till this instant I had a wrong apprehension of every thing in nature. I have pursued shadows, and entertained myself with dreams. I have been treasuring up dust, and sporting myself with the wind. I look back on my past life, and but for some memorials of infamy and guilt, it is all a blank—a perfect vacancy! I might have grazed with the beasts of the field, or sung with the winged inhabitants in the woods, to much better purpose than any for which I have lived. And, Oh! but for some faint hope, a thousand times more blessed had I been, to have slept with the clods of the valley, and never heard the Almighty’s fiat; nor waked into life at his command!

“I never had a just apprehension of the solemnity of the part I am to act till now. I have often met death insulting on the hostile plain, and, with a stupid boast, defied his terrors; with a courage, as brutal as that of the warlike horse, I have rushed into the battle, laughed at the glittering spear, and rejoiced at the sound of the trumpet, nor had a thought of any state beyond the grave, nor the great tribunal to which I must have been summoned;

Where all my secret guilt had been reveal’d,
Nor the minutest circumstance conceal’d.

It is this which arms death with all its terrors ; else I could still mock at fear, and smile in the face of the gloomy monarch. It is not giving up my breath ; it is not being for ever insensible, is the thought at which I shrink : it is the terrible hereafter, the something beyond the grave at which I recoil. Those great realities, which, in the hours of mirth and vanity, I have treated as phantoms, as the idle dreams of superstitious beings ; these start forth, and dare me now in their most terrible demonstration. My awakened conscience feels something of that eternal vengeance I have often defied.

“ To what heights of madness is it possible for human nature to reach ? What extravagance is it to jest with death ! to laugh at damnation ! to sport with eternal chains, and recreate a jovial fancy with the scenes of infernal misery !

“ Were there no impiety in this kind of mirth, it would be as ill-bred as to entertain a dying friend with the sight of an Harlequin, or the rehearsal of a Farce. Every thing in nature seems to reproach this levity in human creatures. The whole creation, man excepted, is serious : man, who has the highest reason to be so, while he has affairs of infinite consequence depending on this short uncertain duration. A condemned wretch may with as good a grace go dancing to his execution, as the greatest part of mankind go on with such a thoughtless gaiety to their graves.

“ Oh ! my friend, with what horror do I recall those hours of vanity we have wasted together ? Return, ye lost neglected moments ! How should I prize you above the Eastern treasures ! Let me dwell with hermits ; let me rest on the cold earth ; let me converse in cottages ; may I but once more stand a candidate for an immortal crown and have my probation for celestial happiness.

“ Ye vain grandeurs of a court ! Ye sounding titles, and perishing riches ! what do ye now signify ! what consolation, what relief can ye give me ? I have a splendid passage to the grave ; I die in state, and languish under a gilded canopy ; I am expiring on soft and downy pillows, and am respectfully attended by my servants and physicians : my dependants sigh, my sisters weep ; my father bends beneath a load of years and grief ! my lovely wife, pale and silent, conceals her inward anguish ; my friend, who was as my own soul, suppresses his sighs, and leaves me to hide his secret grief. But, oh ! which

of these will answer my summons at the high Tribunal! Which of them will bail me from the arrest of death? Who will descend into the dark prison of the grave for me?

“ Here they all leave me, after having paid a few idle ceremonies to the breathless clay, which perhaps may lie reposed in state, while my soul, my only conscious part, may stand trembling before my Judge.

“ My afflicted friends, it is very probable, with great solemnity, will lay the senseless corpse in a stately monument, inscribed with

Here lies the Great——

But could the pale carcase speak, it would soon reply ;

False marble where !

Nothing but poor and sordid dust lies here !

While some flattering panegyric is pronounced at my interment, I may perhaps be hearing my just condemnation at a superior Tribunal ; where an unerring verdict may sentence me to everlasting infamy. But I cast myself on his absolute mercy, through the infinite merits of the Redeemer of lost mankind. Adieu, my dear friend, till we meet in the world of spirits !”

* * * *

Nothing is so well calculated to convince us of the vast importance of living wholly under the power of the Gospel, as seeing great and valuable men dying in such a low, sneaking, and unworthy manner, as many of the first characters of our world have been known to do. The cases of Grotius and Salmasius, of Johnson, and Haller, are mortifying instances. Great talents, great learning, great celebrity, are all utterly insufficient to constitute a man happy, and give him peace and confidence in a dying hour. We know the promises of God are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus ; but if the promises are sure, and strongly animating to the proper objects of them, the threatnings of God are not less infallible, and at the same time are extremely alarming to the proper objects of them. Nothing within the compass of nature can enable a man, with the eyes of his mind properly enlightened, to face death without fear and dismay, but a strong conscious sense, founded on scriptural evidence, that our sins are pardoned, that God is reconciled, and that the Judge of the world is become our friend.

IV. EXAMPLES OF PERSONS LIVING AND DYING, EITHER WITH CONFIDENCE, OR IN THE FULL ASSURANCE OF FAITH.

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. *Psalms cxvi. 15.*

Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.

Numb. xxiii. 10.

34. Joseph Addison, Esq. was a very able and elegant advocate for the Bible, in life and death. Just before his departure, having sent for a young Nobleman nearly related to him, who requested to know his dying commands;—his answer was—"See in what peace a Christian can die!"

He spake with difficulty, and soon expired.—Through grace divine, how great is man! Through divine mercy how stingless death!

"He taught us how to live; and, oh! too high
A price for knowledge, taught us how to die*."

35. Dr. John Leland, after spending a long and exemplary life in the service of the Gospel, closed it with the following words:—"I give my dying testimony to the truth of Christianity. The promises of the Gospel are my support and consolation. They, alone, yield me satisfaction in a dying hour. I am not afraid to die. The Gospel of Christ has raised me above the fear of death; for I know that my Redeemer liveth."

36. Monsieur Pascal was a great man in every way, and one of the most humble and devout believers in Jesus that ever lived. The celebrated Bayle saith of his life, that "a hundred volumes of sermons are not worth so much as this single life, and are far less capable of disarming men of impiety. The extraordinary humility and devotion of Monsieur Pascal gives a more sensible mortification to the Libertines of the age, than if one was to let loose upon them a dozen of Missionaries. They can now no longer attack us with their favourite and darling objection, that there are none but little and narrow spirits, who profess themselves the votaries of piety and religion: for we can now tell them, and boldly tell them, that both the maxims and practice thereof have been pushed on to the

* See Dr. Young's Conjectures on Original Composition.

strongest degree, and carried to the greatest height, by one of the profoundest Geometricians, by one of the most subtil Metaphysicians, and by one of the most solid and penetrating Geniuses that ever yet existed on this earth*.”

37. Olympia Fulvia Morata, was one of the earliest and brightest ornaments of the Reformation. She could declaim in Latin, converse in Greek, and was a critic in the most difficult classics. But after it pleased God by his grace to open the eyes of her mind to discover the truth, she became enamoured of the Sacred Scriptures above all other books in the world, and studied them by day and by night. And when dissolution approached, she declared she felt nothing but “an inexpressible tranquillity and peace with God through Jesus Christ.”—Her mouth was full of the praises of God, and she emphatically expressed herself by saying,—“I am nothing but joy.”

38. William Lord Russel, delivered himself, just before his execution, in the strongest terms of faith and confidence. Besides many other things, he said:—“Neither my imprisonment nor fear of death have been able to discompose me in any degree. On the contrary, I have found the assurances of the love and mercy of God, in and through my blessed Redeemer, in whom I only trust. And I do not question but I am going to partake of that fulness of joy, which is in his presence; the hopes of which do so wonderfully delight me, that I think this is the happiest time of my life, though others may look upon it as the saddest.”

39. Charles the Fifth, Emperor of Germany, King of Spain, and Lord of the Netherlands, after having alarmed and agitated all Europe for near fifty years, retired from the world, and enjoyed more complete contentment in this situation than all his grandeur had ever yielded him. “I have tasted,” said he, “more satisfaction in my solitude, in one day, than in all the triumphs of my former reign; and I find that the sincere study, profession, and practice of the Christian reli-

* “This great man, during some of the latter years of his life, spent his whole time in prayer, and in reading the Holy Scriptures; and in this he took incredible delight.”—*Jesup's Life of Pascal*.

In his Thoughts on Religion there is a fine expostulation with Unbelievers, which ought most seriously to be attended to by every person of that description.

gion, hath in it such joys and sweetness as courts are strangers to*.”

40. Oxenstiern was Chancellor of Sweden, and one of the most able and learned men of his time, and yet he was not too great and too wise to be above being taught by the Sacred Writings. “After all my troubles and toilings in the world,” says he, “I find that my private life in the country has afforded me more contentment than ever I met with in all my public employments. I have lately applied myself to the study of the Bible, wherein all wisdom, and the greatest delights are to be found. I therefore counsel you (the English ambassador) to make the study and practice of the Word of God your chief contentment and delight; as indeed it will be to every soul who savours the truths of God, which infinitely excel all worldly things.”

41. Mr Selden, the famous Lawyer, whom Grotius calls, “the glory of the English nation,” was, as Sir Matthew Hale declared, “a resolved serious Christian, and a great adversary to Hobbes’s errors.” He was generally considered as one of the most eminent philosophers, and most learned men of his time. He had taken a diligent survey of

* Louis, one of the late Dukes of Orleans, expressed the delight he found in piety and devotion in the following terms, which are somewhat similar to the above of Charles:—“I know by experience, that sublunary grandeur and sublunary pleasure are deceitful and vain, and are always infinitely below the conceptions we form of them. But, on the contrary, such happiness and such complacency may be found in devotion and piety, as the sensual mind has no idea of.”

Gustavus Adolphus, the renowned King of Sweden, was also eminent for his piety towards God, and has been known to spend hours together in religious retirement. So too our excellent Alfred.

It is said likewise of his late Majesty King George II. that during war time, he would constantly be in his closet between five and six o’clock in the morning, winter and summer, praying for the success of his fleets and armies.

A remarkable instance of attention to the blessing of the Divine Being we have also in the conduct of the present truly valiant Admiral Lord Duncan. Previous to the late action on the coast of Holland, during the awful moments of preparation, he called all his officers upon deck, and in their presence prostrated himself in prayer before the God of Hosts, committing himself and them, with the cause they maintained, to his sovereign protection, his family to his care, his soul and body to the disposal of his Providence; then, rising from his knees, he gave command to make the attack.

all kinds of learning, and had read as much perhaps as any man ever did ; and yet, towards the latter end of his days, he declared to Archbishop Usher, that notwithstanding he had been so laborious in his enquiries, and curious in his collections, and had possessed himself of a treasure of books and manuscripts upon all ancient subjects ; yet “ he could rest his soul on none, save the Scriptures*.”—This is a perfect eulogium on the Sacred Volume.

42. Monsieur Claude was a very considerable man among the protestants, who were driven out of France by Lewis the Fourteenth. When he was taken ill he sent for the senior pastor of the church, to whom in the presence of all his family he expressed himself thus :—“ Sir, I was desirous to see you, and to make my dying declaration before you. I am a miserable sinner before God. I most heartily beseech him to shew me mercy for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. I hope he will hear my prayer. He has promised to hear the cries of repenting sinners. I adore him for blessing my ministry. It has not been fruitless in his church ; it is an effect of God’s grace, and I adore his providence for it.”

After pausing awhile, he added, “ I have carefully examined all religions. None appear to me worthy of the wisdom of God, and capable of leading man to happiness, but the Christian religion. I have diligently studied Popery and the Reformation. The protestant religion, I think, is the only good religion. It is all found in the Holy Scriptures, the Word of God. From this, as from a fountain, all religions must be drawn. Scripture is the root, the protestant religion is the trunk and branches of the tree. It becomes you all to keep steady to it.”

About a week before he died, with true patriarchal dignity, he sat up in his bed, and asked to speak with his son and family. “ Son,” said he, tenderly embracing him, “ I am leaving you. The time of my departure is at hand.” Silence and sobs, and floods of tears followed, each clasped in the other’s arms. The family all came and asked his blessing. “ Most willingly,” replied he, “ will I give it you.” Mrs. Claude kneeled down by the bed-side. “ My wife,” said he, “ I have always tenderly

* This is equally true also of that great philosophic soul, Marcilius Ficinus, who was as learned a man as Italy ever produced. After he had read all good authors, he rested in the Bible as the only book.

loved you. Be not afflicted at my death. The death of the saints is precious in the sight of God. In you I have seen a sincere piety. I bless God for it. Be constant in serving him with your whole heart. He will bless you. I recommend my son and his family to you, and I beseech the Lord to bless you." To his son, who, with an old servant was kneeling by his mother, he said, among other things, "Son, you have chosen the good part. Perform your office as a good pastor, and God will bless you. Love and respect your mother. Be mindful of this domestic. Take care she wants nothing as long as she lives. I give you all my blessing."

He afterwards said, at several times: "I am so oppressed that I can attend only to two of the great truths of religion, the mercy of God, and the gracious aids of his Holy Spirit."

"I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.—

"My whole recourse is to the mercy of God. I expect a better life than this.—

"Our Lord Jesus Christ is my only righteousness."

Thus died the venerable and inestimable John Claude, in the sixty-eighth year of his age, A. D. 1687.

43. The Rev. Samuel Walker, of Truro, in Cornwall, was a minister of no ordinary rank in the church of Christ. His excessive labours, however, ruined his constitution, and he died at the age of forty-eight. When his dissolution drew near, after much former darkness, but the most assured confidence in God, he broke out to his nurse in this rapturous expression:—"I have been upon the wings of the cherubim! Heaven has in a manner been opened to me! I shall soon be there!"—Next day to a friend, who came to see him, he said, with a joy in his countenance more than words can utter:—O my friend, had I strength to speak, I could tell you such news as would rejoice your very soul! I have had such views of heaven! But I am not able to say more."

44. The Rev. James Hervey is well known to have been an elegant scholar, and a believer in the Bible, with its most distinguished truths. When he apprehended himself to be near the close of life, and stood, as it were, on the brink of the grave, with eternity full in view, he wrote to a friend at a distance to tell him what were his sentiments in that awful situa-

tion. "I have been too fond," said he, "of reading every thing valuable and elegant that has been penned in our language, and been peculiarly charmed with the historians, orators, and poets of antiquity : but were I to renew my studies, I would take my leave of those accomplished trifles : I would resign the delight of modern wits, amusements and eloquence, and devote my attention to the Scriptures of Truth. I would sit with much greater assiduity at my divine Master's feet, and desire to know nothing in comparison of Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

After this, when his dissolution drew still nearer, he said to those about him :—"How thankful am I for death ! It is the passage to the Lord and Giver of eternal life. O welcome, welcome death ? Thou mayest well be reckoned among the treasures of the Christian ; To live is Christ, but to die is gain ! Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy most holy and comfortable Word ; for mine eyes have seen thy precious salvation."

45. Dr. Leechman, late Principal of the College of Glasgow, at the close of life, thus addressed the son of a worthy Nobleman, who was designed for the Church, and the early part of whose education had been much under the Doctor's eye.

"You see the situation I am in : I have not many days to live : I am glad you have had an opportunity of witnessing the tranquillity of my last moments. But it is not tranquillity and composure alone ; it is joy and triumph ; it is complete exultation."—His features kindled, his voice rose as he spake. "And whence," says he, "does this exultation spring ?—From that Book (pointing to a Bible that lay on a table)—from that Book, too much neglected indeed, but which contains invaluable treasures ! treasures of joy and rejoicing ! for it makes us certain that this mortal shall put on immortality."

46. The late Rev. William Romaine was a zealous and successful preacher of the Gospel of Jesus, and adorned it by a suitable character above fifty years. In his last illness not one fretful or murmuring word ever escaped his lips. "I have," said he, "the peace of God in my conscience, and the love of God in my heart. I knew before the doctrines I preached to be truths, but now I experience them to be blessings. Jesus is more precious than rubies, and all that can be

desired on earth is not to be compared to him." He was in full possession of his mental powers to the last moment, and near his dissolution cried out, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty! Glory be to thee on high for such peace on earth; and good will to men*."

These are glorious instances of the power of religion upon the human mind, in the most trying circumstances of nature. I know it is fashionable for luke-warm and pharisaical Christians, who have a form of godliness, but deny the power, and for philosophisters of every description, to treat all such death-bed scenes as delusive and fanatical. I am not, however, ashamed to say, that dissolutions of the above description appear to me honourable to religion, and desirable above all the enjoyments of the world. If this be enthusiasm, may I be the rankest enthusiast that ever existed. Such enthusiasts, thanks be to God, have appeared, more or less, in every age of the Gospel-dispensation. They are increasing now in a considerable degree, and they shall abound more and more, maugre all the oppositions of Infidelity, and the cool moral harangues of a secular and luke-warm Clergy. Large numbers of examples might be produced, of a similar kind, from those who lived before the rise of both methodism and puritanism, besides these we have mentioned; but the only one I shall introduce here, by way of contrast to the death-bed scenes of Chesterfield, Voltaire, Rousseau, and the other unhappy characters we have recorded, shall be that of the learned and excellent Bishop Bedell, that scourge of ecclesiastical corruption, that admirable pattern for prelates and clergymen, and that glory for the Irish hierarchy.

47. After a life spent in the most laborious service of his Divine Master, when he apprehended his great change to draw near, he called for his sons, and his son's wives, and spake to them, at several times, as he was able, as nearly 'as could be recollected, in the following words:

"I am going the way of all flesh: I am ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand. Knowing

* The Editor recommends to the reader's serious attention and perusal, the life of the late Rev. J. Newton, written by Mr. Cecil; and also of the Rev. Cornelius Winter, written by Mr. Jay.

therefore, that shortly I must put off this tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. I know also, that if this my earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, I have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, a fair mansion in the New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God. Therefore, to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain; which encreaseth my desire even now to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better than to continue here in all transitory, vain, and false pleasures of this world, of which I have seen an end.

“Hearken, therefore, unto the last words of your dying father. I am no more in this world, but ye are in the world. I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God, through the all-sufficient merits of Jesus Christ my Redeemer; who ever lives to make intercession for me; who is a propitiation for all my sins, and washed me from them all in his own blood; who is worthy to receive glory, and honour, and power; who hath created all things, and for whose pleasure they are and were created.

“My witness is in heaven and my record on high, that I have endeavoured to glorify God on earth; and in the ministry of the Gospel of his dear Son, which was committed to my trust, I have finished the work which he gave me to do, as a faithful ambassador of Christ, and steward of the mysteries of God. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation, io! I have not refrained my lips, O Lord! thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation; I have not concealed thy loving-kindness and thy truth from the great congregation of mankind. He is near that justifieth me, that I have not concealed the words of the Holy One; but the words that he gave to me, I have given to you, and ye have received them.

“I had a desire and resolution to walk before God in every stage of my pilgrimage, from my youth up to this day, in truth and with an upright heart, and to do that which was upright, in his eyes, to the utmost of my power; and what things were gain to me formerly, these things I count now loss for Christ: yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things: and I count them but

ding, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death. I press, therefore, towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

“ Let nothing separate you from the love of Christ, neither tribulation, nor distress, nor persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor sword ; though, as we hear and see, for his sake we are killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter ; yea, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us ; for I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any creature shall be able to separate me from the love of God in Christ Jesus, my Lord. Therefore, love not the world, nor the things of the world ; but prepare daily and hourly for death, which now besieges us on every side ; and be faithful unto death, that we may meet together joyfully on the right hand of Christ at the last day, and follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth ; with all those that are clothed in white robes in sign of innocency, and palms in their hands in sign of victory ; which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. They shall hunger no more, nor thirst, neither shall the sun light on them ; nor any heat ; for the Lamb, that is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

“ Choose rather, with Moses, to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season ; which will be bitterness in the latter end. Look, therefore, for sufferings, and to be made partakers of the suffering of Christ ; to fill up that which is behind of the affliction of Christ in your flesh, for his body's sake, which is the church. What can you look for, but one woe after another, while the Man of sin is thus suffered to rage, and to make havoc of God's people at his pleasure, while men are divided about trifles that ought to be more vigilant over us, and careful of those whose blood is precious in God's sight,

though now shed every where like water. If ye suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye ; be not afraid of their terror, neither be ye troubled ; and be ye in nothing terrified by your adversaries ; which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. For to you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake. Rejoice, therefore, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. And if ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye ; the Spirit of glory and of Christ resteth on you ; on their part he is evil spoken of, on your part he is glorified.

" God will surely visit you in due time, and turn your captivity as the rivers of the south, and bring you back again into your possession in this land : though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations ; yet ye shall reap in joy, though now ye sow in tears ; all our losses shall be recompensed with abundant advantages ; for my God will supply all your need, according to his riches in glory, by Jesus Christ, who is able to do exceeding abundantly for us, above all that we are able to ask or think."

After that, he blessed his children and those who stood about him in an audible voice, in these words : " God of his infinite mercy bless you all, and present you holy and unblameable, and irreproveable in his sight, that ye may meet together at the right hand of our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Amen ! To which he added these words : " I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course of my ministry and life together. Though grievous wolves have entered in among us, not sparing the flock ; yet I trust the great Shepherd of his flock will save and deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in this cloudy and dark day : and they shall be no more a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beasts of the land devour them ; but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid.— O Lord, I have waited for thy salvation ! " And after a little interval, he said, I have kept the faith once given to the saints ; for the which cause I have also suffered these things ; but I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day."

After this, the good Bishop spake little more. His sickness increased, his speech failed, and he slumbered the remainder of his time away, till his discharge came.

Let incredulity itself now say, if this was not an admirable close of so laborious and useful a life as this excellent man is known to have lived.

One may defy all the sons of infidelity to shew us an example among their brethren, of a life so useful, and a death so great, so noble, so glorious, as this of the good Bishop*.

Now, my Friends and Countrymen, these are all so many well attested matters of fact. Most of the persons mentioned were of the first reputation in their respective spheres of action. It would be prudent to review the whole; to compare the several instances; and weigh thoroughly the issue: for though it is not our province to determine the final fates of men, we may, from such comparison, see clearly whose situation is most eligible at the close of life, and whose case stands fairest for future felicity. Extremely weak, therefore, would it be, to let any man sneer us out of our Bible, our Redeemer, and our Salvation. Did we ever know a person lament, when he came to die, that he had taken too much care to serve his Creator, and save his soul alive? Did we ever hear of a Deist, who gloried in his departing moments, that he had been favoured with success, in making converts to the principles of Infidelity? Or did we ever see a sound scholar, who was at the same time a chaste, temperate, moral, and conscientious man, that lived and died an Unbeliever†? Instances of a contrary nature we have

* Be it observed too, what use this admirable man makes of the Sacred Writings.

“They know not ———
That Scripture is the only cure of woe:
That field of promise, how it flings abroad
Its odour o’er the Christian’s thorny road;
The soul, reposing on assur’d relief,
Feels herself happy amidst all her grief,
Forgets her labour as she toils along,
Weeps tears of joy, and bursts into a song.”

Cowper’s Poem on Truth.

† Lord Bolingbroke was a man of considerable talents, and lived and died an Infidel. But when we reflect, that he was at the same time a libertine, and much addicted to women and wine, we shall

known many, but rarely one which comes up to this description. Persons of an affected liberality of mind, indeed, are frequently found, who hector, domineer, and speak greatswelling words of vanity, while health and prosperity smile upon them; but they generally lose their courage, and appear to infinite disadvantage, when death and judgment stare them in the face. If their souls are not harrowed up with horror, as in the cases of Voltaire, Newport, Altamont, and others; at best they are sullen, gloomy, disconsolate, like Hobbes and Chesterfield; or, having their consciences seared as

cease to wonder that he rejected Christianity, notwithstanding the high compliments he sometimes thought proper to pay it.

Sir William Temple, too, "was a person of true judgment in civil affairs, and very good principles, with relation to government; but in nothing else. He was a vain man, much blown up in his own conceit, which he shewed too indecently on all occasions. He seemed to think, that things were as they are from all eternity; at least he thought Religion was fit only for the mob.—He was a great admirer of the sect of Confucius in China, who were Atheists themselves, or left religion to the rabble. He was a corrupter of all that came near him, and he delivered himself up wholly to study, ease, and pleasure." *Burnet's Own Times*, A. D. 1674.

Sir Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury, was "a man of various talents, but a Deist at best, in his religion. He had the dotage of astrology in him to a high degree. He fancied, that after death our souls lived in stars. He had a general knowledge of the slighter parts of learning, but understood little to the bottom: so he triumphed in a rambling way of talking, but argued slightly when he was held close to any point. He had a wonderful faculty at opposing, and running things down; but had not the like force in building up. He had such an extravagant vanity in setting himself out, that it was very disagreeable."

Sir George Savile, afterwards Viscount, Earl and Marquis of Halifax, was "a man of great and ready wit; full of life, and very pleasant, much turned to satire. He let his wit run much on matters of Religion: so that he passed for a bold and determined Atheist; though he often protested he was not one. He confessed he could not swallow down every thing that Divines imposed on the world. He was a Christian by submission; he believed as much as he could.—In a fit of sickness, I knew him very much touched with a sense of religion. I was then often with him. He seemed full of good purposes; but they went off with his sickness." *Burnet's Own Times*.

This is a specimen of the general characters of those who reject the Gospel of Christ. Gray, the Poet, seems to have had an opinion of Shaftesbury equally low with the above of Bishop Burnet.—See Johnson's *Lives of the English Poets*, vol. iv. pp. 464, 465.

with an hot iron, they are insensible to the vast realities of the invisible world, brave it out and sport blind-fold on the brink of destruction, after the manner of Servin, Hume, Emmer-son, and several of the late French philosophers. But surely a conduct of this kind is highly unbecoming men of wisdom, even upon their own supposition that death is an eternal sleep. Is annihilation so small a matter, that a reasonable man can look upon it with complacency? Hume's conduct was infinitely unnatural. It was the effect of pride and sophistical philosophy. "He had a vanity in being thought easy," as Dr. Johnson justly observes.

"That must be our cure,
To be no more. Sad cure! For who would lose
——— this intellectual being,
Those thoughts that wander through eternity,
To perish rather, swallowed up and lost
In the wide womb of uncreated night,
Devoid of sense and motion?"

It will be the concern of every wise man, therefore, to take warning in time, to be cautious how he gives credit to the representations of Unbelievers, and consider well what the end of our present state of trial will be. It is an easy business to revile and stigmatize the Bible. Few things more so. Any smatterer in learning, who hath got a wicked heart, a witty head, and a comfortable flow of scurrilous language, is competent to the task. Examples of this kind we meet with in every neighbourhood. Profound scholars, however, and modest men, have always been incapable of such conduct. What Lord Bacon*

* Lord Bacon was a serious believer in the Gospel of Christ, and hath given us his Creed at some length, which is worthy the attention of the reader. The above passage is taken from his *Essays*, No. 16.—In a prayer which he wrote upon a certain occasion, he addresses the Almighty by saying—"Thy creatures have been my books, but thy Scriptures much more. I have sought thee in the courts, fields, and gardens; but I have found thee in thy temples."

Sir Richard Steel gives us a fine character of this extraordinary person. He says, "He was a man who for greatness of genius, and compass of knowledge, did honour to his age and country; one might almost say, to human nature itself. He possessed at once all those extraordinary talents which were divided among the greatest authors of antiquity. He had the sound, distinct comprehensive knowledge of Aristotle, with all the beautiful lights, graces and embellishments of Cicero. One does not know which to ad-

saith of Atheism is equally true of Deism: "A little philosophy, inclineth man's mind to Atheism; but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to Religion!" Our great moral Poet, too, will teach us the same lesson:

"A little learning is a dangerous thing;
 Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring.
 Their shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
 And drinking largely sobers us again*."

What then if Thomas Paine, who is well known to be both illiterate and immoral, insolent and satirical (ill qualifications for the discovery of moral and religious truth, which consists in purity, modesty, humility, sobriety, and goodness) though otherwise a man of good natural understanding, is an unbeliever in the divine mission of the Son of God? It may be some consolation to remember, that the first characters, who ever adorned our world, in every department of human life, have not been ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. Every man would do well to reflect, in these days of abounding licentiousness, by way of supporting the mind against the ridicule of professed Deists that the Divines, Butler, and Bentley, and Barrow, and Berkley, and Cudworth, and Clarke, and Sherlock, and Doddridge, and Lardner, and Pearson, and Taylor, and Usher, and a thousand more, were believers†: that the Poets, Spencer, and Waller, and Cowley, and Prior,

mire most in his writings, the strength of reason, force of style, or brightness of imagination."—*Tatler*, No. 267.

* "The Christian Religion," says another great writer, "has nothing to apprehend from the strictest investigation of the most learned of its adversaries; it suffers only from the misconceptions of sciolists, and silly pretenders to superior wisdom. A little learning is far more dangerous to the faith of those who possess it than ignorance itself."

† It has been conceived, through mistake, that the author intended in this place to vouch for the genuine piety of every individual of the long list here enumerated. But this was by no means necessary to his argument, however favourably he might have conceived of the generality of these characters. He is arguing simply here for the Truth of the Scriptures; and the drift of his argument is, that they have approved themselves, respecting their veracity, to the understandings of the greatest and most enlightened geniuses; and withstood the scrutiny of the most deep and critical investigation. This is precisely the argument adopted by Lord Chancellor Erskine, when counsel in the prosecution against

and Thompson, and Gray, and Young, and Milton, were believers : that the Statesmen, Hyde, and Somers, and Cullen, and Pultney, and Howard and King, and Barrington, and Littleton, with numberless more*, were believers : that the Moralists, Steel, and Addison, and Hawksworth, and Johnson were believers : that the Physicians, Arbuthnot, and Cheyne, and Brown, and Boerhaave, and Pringle, and Hartley, and Haller, and Mead, and Fothergill, were believers : that the Lawyers, Hale, and Melmoth, and Forbes, and Hailes, and Pratt, and Blackstone, and Jones†, were believers : that the Philosophers, Pascal, and Grotius, and Ray, and Cotes, and Ferguson, and Adams, and Locke, and Euler, and Newton, were believers‡. Where is the great misfortune, then, to the interests of religion, if luke-warm Christians of every persuasion betray the cause they pretend to espouse, and if Unbelievers of every description imagine a vain thing against the Redeemer of mankind, and the Book which he hath caused to be written for our instruction. Nothing less than demonstration on the side of Infidelity should induce any man to

Williams, referred to in the Preface. Our Author knew too well the difference between the mere assent of the understanding to the truth of the Scriptures, and their saving influence on the heart, to make any confusion between them. A man may be a true believer in the authenticity of the Scriptures, while he is a very infidel as to the obedience he pays to them.—*Editor.*

* Washington was lately a living character, and generally allowed to be one of the first of warriors, the first of politicians, and worthiest of men. The same gentleman is the delight of “an admiring and astonished world,” and yet—hear it, O ye minute philosophers of degenerate Europe—he was a Christian!

† It is a pleasure to hear such men as the honourable Thomas (now Lord) Erskine, one of the first orators of the age, come boldly forward in favour of the Gospel of Jesus. “No man ever existed,” says he, “who is more alive to every thing connected with the Christian faith than I am, or more unalterably impressed with its truths.”—*View of the Causes, &c.* p. 56.

‡ We are well aware that the truth of Christianity cannot be established by authority. But if its truth cannot be so established; neither can its falsehood. Indeed no man can be a competent judge, either of the truth or falsehood of the Gospel, who has not turned his attention to it for a considerable time with all seriousness of mind, and with a considerable share of literary information. We may experience its saving power, but we are ill qualified to defend its veracity.

pounds a year, making upon an average near 83 pounds a year a-piece*.

The whole income of the Kirk of Scotland was in 1755, about 68,500 pounds a year. This was divided among 944 Ministers, and on an average made 72 pounds a-piece per annum.

Upon a general view of these matters, when it is considered, that all the Bishoprics, Prebendaries, Deaneries, Headships of Colleges, and best Church Livings, are occupied by a smaller number, in all probability, than an eighteenth part of these Clergy; what a deplorable situation must a large share of the remaining seventeen thousand Ministers be in, especially under the present advanced price of most of the common necessities of life? And then, it is curious enough, that these Church Dignitaries, who are in possession of several thousands a year per man, have made laws, directly contrary to the practice of St. Paul, that the inferior Clergy, who are destitute of all the elegancies, and many of the comforts of life, shall not be permitted to follow any other calling, whereby to improve their condition, and get bread for their families! Would there be any thing inconsistent with the character of a Minister of the Gospel of Christ, if the poor Rectors, Vicars, and Curates of the country, should make a common cause, and associate together in one body against their unfeeling oppressors†? Could there be any impropriety

The followers of the late Reverend George Whitefield, and Lady Huntingdon, are said to consist of nearly an equal number in Great Britain, though, I should suppose, this calculation is rather exaggerated.

It appears from Dr. Whitehead's Lives of the Wesley family, that the name of Methodist was first bestowed upon Mr. Charles Wesley, in 1728, at Oxford, for the exact method and order which he observed in spending his time, and regulating his conduct.—An origin surely truly honourable, and of which no wise man need be ashamed!

And then, what a highly respectable compliment do the "blind mouths" of this world pay the Methodists, in calling every man by that name, whose conduct is moral, whose piety is fervent, and whose affections are set upon the things above?—Good men in all ages have been what the foolish world now call Methodists.

* See an Essay on the Revenues of the Church of England.

† Every man is an Oppressor who holds that which ought to be in the hands of another.—It does not appear to me, that we can justly blame any man for being a Deist, while the great body of us, the Bishops and Clergy, conduct ourselves in the manner we usually do. The spirit of our Hierarchy seems, in various res-

in their conduct, if they should peaceably and respectfully address the King, who is temporal Head of the Church, or the Legislature of the land, to take their circumstances into serious consideration? One man—not a whit better than his brethren—shall enjoy 20,000 pounds a year—another 15,000; another 10,000—another 5000—another 3000—another 2000; and another 1000. One shall heap Living upon Living, Preferment upon Preferment—to a vast amount—merely because he has got access—too often by mean compliances—to some

pects, in direct opposition to the spirit of the Gospel. A conscientious Deist, if such can be found, who worships God in spirit and in truth, is infinitely preferable to a proud haughty pompous Bishop or dignified Clergyman, who trades in livings and souls; and his condemnation will be far less severe. Whatever Bishops and Clergymen of this description may profess, they are Infidels at bottom. They believe nothing of the spirit of Christianity.—Religion is their trade, and gain with them is godliness. They live in the spirit of the ancient Scribes and Pharisees, and they may expect to share in the fate of the Scribes and Pharisees.—Compare Isaiah lvi. 9—12.

Let the clerical reader return to the Conclusion of Bishop Burnet's History of his Own Times, and he will find the negligent Bishops of the land very justly and smartly reprehended for their improper conduct.

Mr. Ostervald, in his excellent Treatise concerning the Causes of the present Corruption of Christians, attributes that corruption chiefly to the Clergy. His words are these:—"The cause of the corruption of Christians is chiefly to be found in the Clergy. I do not mean to speak here of all Churchmen indifferently. We must do right to some, who distinguish themselves by their talents, their zeal, and the holiness of their lives. But the number of these is not considerable enough to stop the course of those disorders which are occasioned in the Church, by the vast multitude of remiss and corrupt pastors. These pull down what the others endeavour to build up."—*P. ii. Cause 3.*

The instances of extreme blame which attaches to the higher orders of the English clergy, are very numerous. A certain gentleman, not a hundred miles from my own neighbourhood, whom I could name, is possessed of about a thousand a year private fortune. He is a married man, but without any children. He has one living in Cheshire, of the value of more than 400 pounds a year: another in Essex, and another elsewhere, the three together making a thousand a year more or less. He is, moreover, Chaplain to a Company, and private Tutor in a Nobleman's family.—But what is most culpable, is, he resides upon none of his livings, and very seldom comes near them, though a lusty, healthful man. Can that Church be faultless, which permits such horrible abuses? The Bishops themselves, however, being generally guilty of holding a variety of preferments, and of most inexcusable non-residence, are disposed to connive at every thing of the kind among the superior Clergy who are under their inspection.

great man—while his more worthy brother is almost in want of bread for his children.—The late Dr. Law, Bishop of Carlisle, if my memory do not fail me, was possessed, at the time of his decease, of ten or more different Preferments. He was Bishop—Head of a College—Prebend—Rector—Librarian, &c. &c. &c. and all this bestowed upon him—not because he was a more holy, useful, and laborious man, than ordinary ; though a man of merit and talents ; but because he wriggled himself into favour with certain great persons, who had influence with men in power. Instances of this kind are not uncommon. They are, however, unjust, impolitic, and unchristian. No wise Legislature ought to permit such abuses, Religion being out of the question. They are inconsistent with every thing decent and proper, while so many valuable, learned, laborious, humble, modest men, are pining in want. I know well, that reflections of this nature are calculated to disoblige those who are interested ; but regardless of consequences, without the least dislike to any man living, or the smallest view to any one individual, or a wish to have any thing better for myself, and actuated only with a love to truth, and the advancement of our common Christianity, I, for one, protest in the face of the sun against all such abuses. And I moreover, solemnly avow, that the spirit of the present times is such, that unless these, and similar disorders are rectified by the wisdom of the Legislature, the ecclesiastical fabric in this country will, ere long, be as completely overturned as that in France has been*. Nothing can prevent it but a speedy and thorough reformation. If the Bishops of the land as first in dignity, would be first in this grand work : if they would make a merit of necessity, and like Bishop Wilson, resign voluntarily, what they cannot long possess in safety : If they would make an offer to their King and Country of withdrawing from the Upper House†; resigning all their secular honours,

* The church of France, before the Revolution, consisted of 18 archbishops, 118 bishops, 366,264 clergy, regular and secular, who together enjoyed a revenue of about five millions sterling. The kingdom was divided into 34,498 parishes, besides 4,644 annexed parishes ; in all 39,142 parishes.

† This, I believe, is an abuse unknown in any other protestant church in Europe, and would never have been submitted to in the purest ages of Christianity. Would to God our Governors in Church and State could see it right to—but what shall I say?—

and commence genuine ministers of the Gospel : Or, should this be too much to expect ; if they would renounce their several pluralities*, and quietly retire into their respective dioceses,

Why should I desire changes, every thing but impossible ?—It is because I wish as well as any man in England to my King and Country, that I desire every thing to be removed that may provoke the Divine displeasure against us, as a nation and people, and bring on the total dissolution of the political frame of things.—The wishes of an obscure clergyman, however, will be less in the scale, than the small dust upon the balance, when weighed against the vast body of archbishops, bishops, deans, prebends, canons, archdeacons, rectors, vicars, curates, lecturers, commissaries, chancellors, proctors, surrogates, &c. &c. with which our church abounds. We Clergymen should do well frequently to study the 34th chapter of Ezekiel. It might do us much good. The following address of Cowper is also worth our attention :

“ Ye Clergy, while your orbit is your place,
Lights of the world, and stars of human race :
But if eccentric ye forsake your sphere,
Prodigious, ominous, and view'd with fear ;
The comet's baneful influence is a dream,
Yours real and pernicious in th' extreme.”

“ Oh laugh, or mourn with me, the rueful jest,
A cassock'd huntsman, and a fiddling priest ;
He from Italian songsters takes his cue,
Set Paul to music, he shall quote him too.
He takes the field ; the Master of the pack
Cries, Well done, Saint ! and claps him on the back.
Is this the path of sanctity ? Is this
To stand a way-mark in the road to bliss ?
Himself a wand'rer from the narrow way,
His silly sheep, what wonder if they stray ?

“ The sacred function, in your hands is made,
Sad sacrilege ! no function but a trade.”

Progress of Error.

* It is no uncommon thing for the Bishops of our Church to hold such preferments as are utterly incompatible with each other. The late Dr. Hinchcliffe was at the same time Bishop of Peterborough, and Master of Trinity College in Cambridge. As Bishop, he ought, by every law of honour, and conscience, and the gospel, to have been resident in his diocese among his clergy and people, As Master of Trinity, his presence could not, in general, be dispensed with.

¶ We have had others, who enjoyed, at the same time, several incompatible preferments—a Bishopric—a Headship of a College—a Prebendary—a Rectory—and other emoluments. As Bishop a man ought to be in his own diocese ; as Head of a college he

never appearing in the great Council of the nation, but when absolutely wanted : If they would come among their Clergy—converse with them freely, and treat them as bre-

must be resident ; as Prebend, certain duties are due ; as Rector of a parish, his absence cannot be dispensed with. And, I might add, as a Lord of Parliament, his presence is frequently and justly required. What account their Lordships can give, either to God or man, for such of the preferments as are absolutely incompatible one with another, it behoves them well to consider. Such examples have a deadly effect upon the interests of religion. Were they to preach like St. Paul, who would regard them, who sees that they do not believe their own professions ? No rank, no talents, no learning, no good sense, no respectability can excuse such a conduct.—We are continually hearing of the rapid spread of Infidelity. The Bishops of London and Durham, in their late excellent Charges, are loud in their complaints. But what appears surprising to me is, that they and others should speak so strongly of the overthrow of Christianity in France. By their leave, and with all due submission, it is not Christianity which has experienced a subversion there. It is the doctrine of Antichrist ; and its subversion will ultimately prove one of the greatest blessings God could bestow upon the nations.—But who is to blame for the spread of Infidelity ? The Bishops and Clergy of the land, more than any other people in it. We, as a body of men, are almost solely and exclusively culpable. Our negligence, luke-warmness, worldly-mindedness, and immorality will ruin the whole country. And when the judgments of God come upon the land, they will fall peculiarly heavy upon the heads of our order of men.

One word upon the situation of the unhappy Irish. We cry out against them for their rebellious conduct : and to be sure they are extremely to blame in many respects. Is there not, however, a cause, an apparent cause, at least, for their dissatisfaction ? The grievances of the Protestant part of the people are many and considerable. The late Lord Bristol, for instance, Bishop of Derry, whose Bishopric is said to have been 15,000 pounds a year, was rambling over Europe, and did not set foot in his diocese for several years ; some have reported, for twenty-four[*].

This is a specimen of the treatment which Churchmen meet with. Can we wonder, if they, as well as the Catholics and Dissenters, should murmur ? Ireland would, in all probability, have been lost to England, had not the mad and bloody zeal of the Catholics, those hellish wretches, united the Protestants in their own defence, for the protection of their lives and properties.

There are twenty-two Bishops, who preside over the established church in Ireland, at the expence of 74,000 pounds a year ; which is at the rate of 3,368 pounds per annum a man, besides all their other preferments. Some of them are known to be very worthy characters ; but others like the one just mentioned, are extremely to blame, though surely not in the same degree. While such are the Shepherds, no wonder if the Sheep go astray. Ought we to be sur-

thren : if they would go about doing good, in all condescension and humility, through their several districts, preaching the Word of life, in an evangelical strain, among the

prised if Catholics, Dissenters, and Methodists succeed in making converts ? if Infidelity abound and run like wild-fire among the people ? if they complain, wish to overturn such a system of corruption and rise in rebellion for the purpose ? Nothing but true religion, or a sense of the impolicy of the measure, can restrain them.—I do affirm again and again, that the slothful and temporising Bishops and Clergy of Europe, are the main authors of the present miseries of Europe, and we may justly and infallibly expect, Divine Providence will ere long kick us off our perches, as has been the case in other countries, and give our offices and emoluments to those who are more worthy of them. Nothing can save us, unless we turn over a new leaf, and become alive to the interests—not of the Church as a secular institution—but to the interests of pure, disinterested, evangelical religion. What might not the 18,000 Clergymen in this country do, were we all zealously concerned for the honour of the Lord Jesus, and the salvation of the people committed to our care ? The face of things in every moral point of view at least, would be extremely different.—What a horrible hell shall we Parsons have when we leave our present beds of down ! How will the devils exult over myriads of full-fed Bishops, Doctors, and dignified Dons, who have rioted upon the spoils of the Church, and neglected or abused their holy charge ?

I add further, that among other causes of complaint in our sister-kingdom, many of the bishoprics are filled up by the Viceroy from among the English clergy, and the best livings are possessed by Englishmen. Hence a very frequent non-residence. Every impartial person must consider this as a real grievance. The Irish clergy, indeed, are, taking them with some few honourable exceptions, in a state truly deplorable, and the great mass of the laity not less so, considered in every religious point of view. What wonder, if the people, left to perish by their ministers for lack of knowledge, should rise up and cut the throats of those ministers ? This is a just re-action of Providence. We talk of the wild Irish, and speak of them as being little raised above a state of savage nature. Let it be considered who is to blame for all this. The Bishops and Clergy, I vow. But the fault is greatly in the ecclesiastical part of the constitutions of the two countries, which will permit the clerical order of men to receive the emoluments of the church, without performing the business for which we are paid. No man can surely say that a reform here would do us any harm ! But if a reform in church-matters is never to be brought about till the Bishops and Clergy themselves embark in it, there is much reason to fear, the event is at no little distance. I must, however, do my own order the justice to observe, that, in former periods, whatever reformatations in religion have been brought forward, some of the Clergy have been the most active and effective instruments. God send us again a few more Wickliffs, Cranmers, Latimers, Riddleys, Hookers, and Gilpins, to deliver us from the remaining dregs of Popish super-

people, after the example of the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, and his Apostles: If they would renounce their pomp and splendour, and set their faces in good earnest against all monopolies of livings; against non-residents; against all immoral, disorderly, and irreligious Clergymen: If they would be the zealous and avowed friends and patrons of laborious pastors, in particular, and of good men of every description, in general: Then would the Church of England soon become, more than ever, the glory of all churches, and the Bishops of that church would be the glory of all Bishops.

It is, however, not to be doubted, that men, possessed of the loaves and fishes, will laugh at all this as visionary and enthusiastic.

“I know the warning song is sung in vain,
That few will hear, and fewer heed the strain.”

Be it so.—I have only to reply—Look at the Bishops and Clergy of France!—They now think themselves hardly treated. But, as a body, they had been excessively to blame; and their

stitution which cleave to us, that the throne of our excellent King may be permanent as the days of heaven, and the British churches become the glory and envy of the whole world!

“Triumphant here may Jesus reign,
And on his vineyard sweetly smile;
While all the virtues of his train,
Adorn our church and bless our Isle!”

[*] It is not a little remarkable, that the late act for “Enforcing the residence of spiritual persons on their livings,” contains an express exemption in favour of the Bishops, who are therefore placed by it under no obligation of residing even on their dioceses, a provision which some may think not without its utility. The principal part of the provisions of the act are calculated to facilitate, and even licence non-residence; an abuse, which if we may credit Bishop Burnet, was not even tolerated in the church of Rome, (see the conclusion of the history of his own times): and so little has been the operation of this act in enforcing residence, that the Editor has been told by persons well informed, that in the diocese of London itself, there are scarcely six instances of clergy who have been compelled to reside under it. It is observed by Selden, (Table Talk 139) that “the people thought they had a great victory over the clergy, when in Henry the VIIIth’s time they got their bill passed, ‘that a clergyman should have but two livings.’ It will be well if the late acts be not found to establish certain principles, which in the result will make both the clergy and the people sensible that they have lost a great victory in being deprived of the advantages of a common Law Tribunal.—*Editor.*”

present sufferings are proportionate to their former culpability. Happy will it be for us, if their negligence and misfortunes make us wise and cautious ! The fate of the Jewish clergy of old, and of the French, Dutch, Flemish, Italian and Swiss Clergy of our own times, comes like a peal of thunder, preaching Reform ; real, and effectual, and speedy Reform, to the Clergy of every country.

You see then, my countrymen, that I, for one, give up all these abuses as indefensible. Every man of common sense and observation, whose eyes are not blinded by prejudice, and whose mind is not closed by sinful habit and self-interest, must see that they are wrong. But, be it remembered, that whatever means Divine Providence may use to correct them—for corrected in due time they must be—the Gospel of Christ is not to be blamed for them. It gives them no countenance ; it predicts their rise, their continuance, their downfall : and it denounces nothing less than the most extreme condemnation against all those, who pervert the Divine Ordinances to secular and self-interested purposes. It is neither Emperors, nor Kings, nor Popes, nor Archbishops, nor Bishops, nor Clergymen of any inferior description, that shall escape the just sentence of the universal Judge. He will make no distinction. He knows no difference between man and man, but what moral and religious qualifications make. Whatsoever a person soweth, that shall he also reap. Mighty sinners shall be mightily punished. Eminently good and useful men shall be eminently rewarded.

To this head let it further be added, that discerning men, observing the conduct, character, and precepts of the Saviour of the world, and comparing them with the conduct and manners of our Church-Dignitaries, cannot help seeing a very striking contrast. His kingdom was not to be of this world : but the conduct of our Bishops, is in a great measure secular. His meat and drink was to do the will of him that sent him. He literally went about doing good. He preached every where, and to all descriptions of men. A genuine patriot, he was never weary of contributing to the happiness of his country. He was frequently in the temple, but never in the palace, unless when dragged thither by force. Our learned Prelates*,

* Among the Bishops of the Church of England may be found a considerable number of characters the most respectable for every

pounds a year, making upon an average near 83 pounds a year a piece.

The whole income of the Kirk of Scotland, was, in 1755, about 68,500 pounds a year. This was divided among 944 ministers, and on an average made 72 pounds a piece, per annum.

When it is considered, that all the bishoprics, prebendaries, deaneries, headships of colleges, and best church-livings, are occupied by a smaller number, in all probability, than an eighteenth part of those clergy, in what a deplorable situation must a large share of the remaining seventeen thousand ministers be? And these church dignitaries, who are in possession of several thousands a year, per man, have made laws, directly contrary to the practice of Paul, that the inferior clergy, who are destitute of all the elegancies, and many of the comforts of life, shall not be permitted to follow any other calling,

What a highly respectable compliment do the "blind mouths" of this world pay the Methodists, in calling every man by that name whose conduct is moral, whose piety is fervent, and whose affections are set upon the things that are above! Good men in all ages have been what the foolish world now call Methodists.

Aiken, in his Tour through North Wales, has paid that body of people a very high compliment. Paley says, "after men became christians, much of their time was spent in prayer and devotion, in religious meetings, in celebrating the eucharist, in conferences, in exhortations, in preaching, in an affectionate intercourse with one another, and correspondence with other societies. Perhaps their mode of life, in its form and habit, was not very unlike the *Unitas Fratrum*, or that of the Modern Methodists."

Cecil has given a fair account of this body of people, which is every where spoken against, and has honestly and ably defended them from the obloquy, which is usually cast upon all seriously religious characters by the world. The single circumstance, of their being generally reviled and abused by other denominations of professing christians, is a certain sign, that there is something peculiarly good and excellent among them. The criterion, whereby to judge, which our Saviour has given us is, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

whereby to improve their condition, and get bread for their families! Would there be any thing inconsistent with the character of a minister of the gospel of Christ, if the poor rectors, vicars, and curates of the country, should make a common cause, and associate together in one body against their unfeeling oppressors? * Could there be any impropriety in

* Every man is an oppressor who holds that which ought to be in the hands of another.—It does not appear to me, that we can justly blame any man for being a deist, while the great body of us, the bishops and clergy conduct ourselves in a manner we usually do. The spirit of our hierarchy is in direct opposition to the spirit of the gospel. A conscientious deist, if such can be found, who worships God in spirit and in truth, is infinitely preferable to a proud, haughty, pompous bishop, or dignified clergyman, who trades in livings and souls; and will be damned with a damnation far less severe. Bishops and clergymen of this description, profess what they will, are infidels at bottom. They believe nothing of the spirit of christianity. Religion is their trade, and gain with them is godliness. They live in the spirit of the ancient Scribes and Pharisees, and they may expect to share in the fate of the Scribes and Pharisees.

Mr. Osterwald, attributes the corruption of the people chiefly to the clergy.—“The cause of the corruption of christians is chiefly to be found in the clergy. I do not mean to speak here of all churchmen indifferently. We must do right to some, who distinguish themselves by their talents, their zeal, and the holiness of their lives. But the number of these is not considerable enough to stop the course of these disorders, which are occasioned in the church by the vast multitudes of remiss and corrupt pastors. These pull down, what the others endeavour to build up.”

The instances of extreme blame which attaches to the higher orders of the English clergy are very numerous. A certain gentleman, not a hundred miles from my own neighbourhood, is possessed of about a thousand a year private fortune. He is a married man, but without children. He has one living in Cheshire, of the value of more than 400 pounds a year; another in Essex, and another elsewhere, the three together making a thousand a year, more or less. He is moreover, chaplain to a company, and private tutor in a nobleman's family. But what is most culpable, he resides upon none of his livings, and very seldom comes near them. Can that church be faultless, which permits such horrible abuses? The bishops themselves, however, being generally guilty of holding a variety of preferments, and of most inexcusable non-residence, are disposed to connive at every thing of the kind among the superior clergy who are under their inspection.

their conduct, if they should peaceably and respectfully address the king, who is head of the church, or the legislature of the land, to take their circumstances into serious consideration? One man—not a droit better than his brethren—shall enjoy 20,000 pounds a year—another 15,000—another 10,000—another 5000—another 3000—another 2000—and another 1000. One shall heap living upon living, preferment upon preferment—to a vast amount—merely because he has got access, too often by mean compliances—to some great man—while his more worthy brother is almost in want of bread for his children. Law, bishop of Carlisle, possessed at the time of his decease, ten or more different preferments. He was bishop—head of a college—prebend—rector—librarian, &c. &c. &c. and all this bestowed upon him—not because he was a more holy, useful and laborious man than ordinary; though a man of merit and talents; but because he wriggled himself into favour with certain great persons, who had influence with men in power. Instances of this kind are common. They are, however, unjust, impolitical, and unchristian. No wise legislature ought to permit such abuses, religion out of the question. They are inconsistent with every thing that is decent and proper, while so many valuable, learned, laborious, humble, modest men, are pining in want. I know that reflections of this nature are calculated to disoblige those who are interested: but, regardless of consequences, without the least dislike to any man living, or the smallest view to any one individual, or a wish to have any thing better for myself, and actuated only with a love to truth, and the advancement of our common christianity, I for one, protest in the face of the sun against all such abuses. And I solemnly avow, that the spirit of the present times is such, that unless these, and similar disorders be rectified, by the wisdom of the legislature, the whole ecclesiastical fabric in this country, will ere long, be completely overturned.* Nothing can prevent it,

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as a body, they have been excessively to blame; and their present sufferings are proportionate to their former culpability. Happy will it be for us, if their negligence and misfortunes make us wise and cautious! The fate of the Jewish cler-

but to the interests of pure, disinterested, evangelical religion. What might not the 18,000 clergymen in this country do, were all but zealously concerned for the honour of the Lord Jesus, and the salvation of the people committed to our care? The face of things in every moral point of view, would be extremely different. What an horrible hell shall we parsons have when we leave our present beds of down? How will the devils exult over myriads of full-fed bishops, doctors, and dignified dons, who have rioted upon the spoils of the church, and neglected or abused their holy charge?

Among other causes of complaint in our sister kingdom, many of the bishoprics are filled up by the viceroy from among the English clergy, and the best livings are possessed by Englishmen. Hence a very frequent non-residence. Every impartial person must consider this as a real grievance. The Irish clergy are, with some few honourable exceptions, in a state truly deplorable, and the great mass of the laity not less so. What wonder, if the people left to perish by their ministers for lack of knowledge, should rise up and cut the throats of those ministers? This is a just re-action of providence. We talk of the Wild Irish, and speak of them as being little raised above a state of nature. Let it be considered who is to blame for all this. The bishops and clergy I vow. But the fault is greatly in the ecclesiastical part of the constitutions of the two countries, which will permit the clerical order of men to receive the emoluments of the church, without performing the duties for which we are paid. No man can surely say, that a reform here would do us any harm! But if a reform in church matters is never to be brought about till the bishops and clergy themselves embark in it, there is reason to fear, the event is at no little distance. I must, however, do my own order the justice to observe, that in former periods, whatever reformatations in religion have been brought forward, some of the clergy have been the most active and effective instruments. God send us again a few more Wickliffs, Cranmers, Latimers, Riddleys, Hookers, and Gilpins, to deliver us from the remaining dregs of Popish superstition which cleave to us, that the British churches may be the glory and envy of the whole world.

“Triumphant here may Jesus reign,
And on his vineyard sweetly smile;
While all the virtues of his train,
Adorn the church and bless our isle!”

gy of old, and of the French, Dutch, Flemish, Italian, and Swiss clergy of our own times, comes, like a peal of thunder, preaching reform; real, and effectual, and speedy reform, to the clergy of every county.

I, for one, give up all these abuses as indefensible.—Every man of common sense and observation, whose eyes are not blinded by prejudice, and whose mind is not closed by sinful habit and self-interest, must see that they are wrong. But, whatever means Divine Providence may use to correct them—for corrected in due time they must be—the gospel of Christ is not to be blamed for them. It gives them no countenance; it predicts their rise, their countenance, their downfall; and it denounces nothing less than the most extreme condemnation against all those, who pervert the Divine Ordinances to secular and self-interested purposes. It is neither emperors, nor kings, nor popes, nor archbishops, nor bishops, nor clergymen of any inferior description, that shall escape the just sentence of the universal Judge. He will make no distinction. He knows no difference between man and man, but what moral and religious qualifications make. Whatsoever a person soweth that shall he also reap. Mighty sinners shall be mightily punished. Eminently good and useful men shall be eminently rewarded.

Discerning men, observing the conduct, character, and precepts of the Saviour of the world, and comparing them with the manners of our church-dignitaries, cannot help seeing a very striking contrast. His kingdom was not to be of this world: but the conduct of our bishops, is secular. His meat and drink was to do the will of him that sent him. He literally went about doing good. He preached every where, and to all descriptions of men. A genuine patriot, he was never weary of contributing to the happiness of his country. He was frequently in the temple, but never in the palace, unless when dragged thither by force. Our learned prelates*

* Among the bishops of the church of England, there may be found some characters the most respectable for every

however, are so occupied in the great Council of the nation ; in dancing attendance at Court ; in guarding their secular emoluments from waste ; in visiting the nobility and gentry of the land ; and in other worldly engagements of various descriptions ; that they have but little time left, either for reading the Scriptures, for private retirement, or for preaching the Gospel to the poor of the flock, in their respective districts*.

moral, literary, and religious attainment ; and the country is under the utmost obligation to them for their exertions at different periods of our history. But were any individuals among them ever so desirous, they have it not in their power to rectify abuses, and reform what they may conceive to be amiss. The system is too compact and well digested. Their hands are tied behind them. The prejudices of some, the interest of others, the supineness of not a few, and the fears of disturbing the long established order of things, in most, form an insuperable barrier against every reform ; inasmuch that nothing, it is to be feared, can accomplish any considerable change for the better, but a convulsion. If, indeed, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the whole Bench of Bishops, had discernment, and humility, and public spirit, and self-denial enough, to come forward of their own accord, and with one consent desire an ameliorated state of things, there might be some hope. But, that six and twenty interested men should be brought to concur in a business of this sort, seems next to an impossibility. The sacrifice is too great ! Human nature is too frail to make it.

* Bishops assuredly ought to reside in their dioceses among their Clergy, preaching in season and out of season ; countenancing and encouraging the good ; reproofing, exhorting, warning, punishing, the unworthy and immoral part of their Clergy. The contrary to this, however, is very frequently the case. If a man happens to have got a little more zeal than ordinary, and labours more diligently to do good than the generality of his brethren, immediately they are all in arms against him. And nothing is more common, than for his ecclesiastical superiors to frown upon him, to stigmatize him as a Methodist, and to oppose his interests in every way they can contrive. Whereas, a Clergyman may be a man of pleasure and dissipation ; gay, foolish, silly, trifling ; he may spend his time in the diversions of the field ; drink, swear, and live as foolishly as the most foolish of his flock, and yet no harm shall happen. He is no Methodist, and, therefore, every favour shall be shewn him which he can desire. Methodism is like the sin against the Holy Ghost ; it is neither to be forgiven in this world, nor in the world to come !

Be it however, observed, that the increase of Dissenters, and the alarming spread of Methodism, are both entirely owing to the luke-warmness, or negligence, or disorderly conduct, or bigotry, or persecuting spirit of the Clergy in the Establishment. And there is no way under heaven of preventing the most mischievous consequences, but by adopting new measures, reforming what is amiss, and out-

To hear a Bishop preach, is a sort of phenomenon in the country. And, if any of that truly respectable body of men

preaching, out-labouring, and outliving all our opposers. The pride of office has injured us extremely. The disdain frequently expressed by us against the several Sectarists has been highly impolitic, and sometimes unchristian. Has not every man living the same right to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience, that we have? To his own master each one must give an account. He that worships God most spiritually, and obeys him most universally, believing in the name of his only-begotten Son, is the best man, and most acceptable to the Divine Being, whether he be found in a Church, in a Quaker's meeting-house, in a Dissenting place of worship, of any other description, or upon the top of a mountain. How long shall we be carried away by weak and superstitious distinctions? In every nation, and among all denominations of men, he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. And if God will accept, why should not man? The Saviour of the world himself hath given us an infallible definition of a Gospel-Church: Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. Let any man consult Locke on Toleration, and he can have no doubt on his mind concerning the liberality of the genuine Gospel of our blessed Saviour. It has been the custom of the Established Clergy of all countries, for many ages, to arrogate to themselves a kind of infallibility. Nay, I might add, there is scarcely a Parson among us all, whether Churchman, Methodist, Quaker, or Dissenter of any other description, that has not got a church, a chapel or a meeting-house in his belly. We are all Popes in our own way; at least, every denomination has its imperious and over-bearing dictators. Let no man, however, think the worse of the New-Testament-religion because of the different hobby-horses which we Parsons think proper to ride. Our Order has had its day; and a pretty long day it has been! The Pope has ridden the Bishops, the Bishops have ridden the Priests, and the Priests have ridden the people. The tables, however, are now turning, though late: and we Parsons must be contented to be ridden by the people. But if the people, in their zeal for freedom, should proceed to cast off the Divine yoke—and there is some danger!—if they should insolently reject the authority of Jesus Christ, our only Lord, and Master, and Saviour, he will visit their offences with a rod, and their sin with scourges. He has a right to our services. We are not our own, but are bought with a price, and no man shall refuse him subjection, and prosper. Every thinking person must feel that he is a dependent creature, and insufficient for his own happiness; a sinful creature, and incapable of atoning for his own transgressions.

I have said above, that among the Bishops of the Church of England may be found a considerable number of characters the most respectable for every moral, literary, and religious attainment. I add too, again, that several of the Bishops and Clergy of the Irish church have been also highly respectable, as well as many of the infe-

—some of whom are both great and good men, and, independent of such considerations, I hope ever to reverence

rior orders of our own Clergy. So likewise have been many of the Bishops and Clergy of the French church. Usher, the Irish-archbishop, for instance, was not only a pious man, but even a walking library, in point of learning. The late Archbishop Newcome was a character of the most respectable literary kind. Bishop Warburton, no mean judge, used to say of Bishop Taylor, "he had no conception of a greater genius upon earth than was that holy man."—Where too was there ever a more admirable character than the author of *Telemachus*? or learned men than Calmet, Du Pin, Montfaucon, and others among the French clergy? Our own Cotes, though but a private clergyman, and young in years at the time of his decease, is said by Bishop Watson, to have been second to none but Newton in sublimity of philosophic genius. But as the learning, piety, genius, and amiable manners of Fenelon and his brethren, could not excuse and make tolerable the corruptions of the Church of France; so neither can the learning, genius, and piety of the Bishops and Clergy of England and Ireland excuse and make justifiable the more tolerable corruptions of the churches of these two countries. We must either simplify and evangelize our ecclesiastical constitutions, or they must fall. I speak this, not from any personal pique or disappointment, not from a love of novelty and change, but upon the authority of the Prophetic Scriptures—with a view to the near completion of the 1260 mystical years—and from a solemn and awful contemplation of the revolutions which are so rapidly taking place through all Europe. England may, and I trust, will be protected by Divine Providence for a time; the iniquity of the Amorites may not yet be full; but the Great Nation, as they vain-gloriously call themselves, must ultimately succeed in their designs, unless a radical reformation should engage the Lord on our side, and prevent our national ruin.

Great tenderness, however, ought to be exercised towards our Governors both in Church and State, upon this delicate subject; because, whenever a King succeeds to the throne of these lands, he swears to maintain the Church in its present state; because all important changes are attended with serious danger to the very existence of society—witness the revolution in France—and because Judge Blackstone, in his *Commentaries*, delivers it as his opinion, that no alteration can take place, either in the Constitution or Liturgy of the Church of England, consistently with the **Act of Union.—Introduction, sect. 4. [*]**

But if this be the case, the Act of Union was unwisely managed. What right has any one generation to legislate for all future generations? and especially to tie up their hands from making changes and improvements adapted to the taste of the revolving ages. Upon this principle Christianity itself, and even the present constitution of England, is an improper innovation on the wisdom of former ages.

It is evident from the opposition of the late Bishop of Roches-

them for their office sake—do vouchsafe, once in a way, as an extreme favour, to indulge the people of their diocese,

ter to the abolition of Holidays, that we may not expect from the Bench of Bishops the smallest concession towards a reformation in the ecclesiastical part of our Constitution. To me, however, what we usually call Holidays, appear in the light of very serious evils to the community. Let a man conscientiously observe the Lord's day; and I will excuse him every other holiday in the calendar.

[*] Though it was certainly stipulated at the time of the Union that no alteration should ever afterwards take place in the doctrine, discipline, worship or government, of the church of England; yet on two recent occasions the legislature, yielding perhaps to the force of the suggestion contained in our author's next note, has thought fit to break through this restriction, at the solicitations of the Bishops, and for the purpose of augmenting their powers. See a pamphlet on the recent extension of the powers of their Lordships the Bishops, published by Longman and Co. But whatever might be the occasion, we may draw from the circumstance a most cheering conclusion, which, could it have had its force on the excellent mind of our Author would have dissipated much of the gloom, with which on this subject it was evidently oppressed, namely, that the Parliament now no longer considers itself as bound down by the strict conditions of the Union, but at liberty to make any alterations it may deem conducive to the advantage of the Church. From this beginning we may doubtless auger the most happy consequences, no less than a full and thorough (tho' perhaps gradual) revision of the whole of our ecclesiastical constitution. The old and mouldering fabric will doubtless undergo a complete repair, the decayed, or faulty materials taken down, the good preserved and strengthened, the rubbish cast away. The revenues of the Clergy will be more equalized, the powers of the Bishops moderated and defined, the liberties and rights of the inferior Clergy, as a necessary consequence, more regarded and better secured; our ecclesiastical courts, those remaining badges of our spiritual bondage, either totally abolished, or greatly reformed, their proceedings no longer enveloped in the mystery of darkness, but regularly published like those of our other Courts; the canon law, or, at least, that sore and grievous burden to clerical consciences, the mystical oath of canonical obedience, entirely done away. The cases of collegiate and clerical subscriptions candidly reconsidered. In short, whatever may exist in our church matters, incapable of abiding the test of reason and scripture, will doubtless (now the passage is free and open,) by our excellent government and present enlightened administration, be rectified.

As to the Coronation Oath, its purport appears to have been misconceived. According to the old construction of it, nothing could have amounted to a more direct violation, than the acts of Parliament to which I have above alluded; but according to the present construction, it does not appear to extend to any parliamentary proceedings; where the King acts only in compliance with the wish of the nation, expressed by its two great representative

where they happen to spend a little time, they usually affect so much pomp and dignity in their manner, and their discourses are so dry and unevangelical; so stiff, so cool, so essaical, so critical, so ethical, so heathen-like, that the poor of the flock can receive little or no benefit and edification.

These learned Gentlemen are so horribly afraid of approaching too near the Methodists*, both in their doctrines, and manner of preaching, that their sermons are most commonly cast more in the mould of Seneca or Epictetus, than in that of St. Paul; and delivered with all the apathy of an ancient philosopher.

bodies. And this is the view in which of late years it has been regarded. See a letter to a nobleman, by C. Butler, Esq.—*Editor*.

* Methodist is a term of reproach which has been made use of for many years, in this country, to stigmatize all the most serious, zealous, and lively professors of religion. It is not confined to any one sect or party: but is common, more or less, to all who are peculiarly animated in the concerns of religion. In the Church of England, as by law established, all those Ministers and people are called Methodists, who believe and preach, and contend for the doctrines of the thirty-nine Articles of religion. And Arians, Socinians, Arminians, and Formalists of every description, who continue to attend public worship in the establishment, are considered by the undiscerning world as her only true members. In short, all who embrace, with a lively and zealous faith, the doctrines of the said thirty-nine Articles; among all the denominations of Christians, are by way of ignominy denominated Methodists. To be zealous, in the most important of all concerns, is to be held as a proverb of reproach! You may be a zealous philosopher, a zealous politician, or a zealous sciolist of almost every description, and you shall meet with approbation and praise; but if you discover any considerable degree of warmth and zeal for the grand peculiarities of the Gospel, and vital, practical, experimental religion, then the devil and all his industrious servants will stigmatize you with every name which they consider as opprobrious and disgraceful. Indeed Methodist, is, in the nineteenth century, what Puritan was in the seventeenth. After the Restoration, people, to shew their aversion to the Puritans, turned every appearance of religion into ridicule, and from the extreme of hypocrisy, flew at once to that of profligacy; so now abundance of people are so alarmed at the idea of being thought Methodists, that they absolutely give up the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel, and become as lukewarm, and indifferent to all religion, as though it was no part of their concern. And yet these Wiseacres, in the true spirit of the ancient Scribes and Pharisees, keep rearing out, Church and King! the Church! the Church! the Temple of the Lord! the Temple of the Lord are we!

“How oft, when Paul has serv’d us with a text,
Has Epictetus, Plato, Tully preach’d !”

Hence these learned Prelates are found to do but little good. Such preaching never was of much use to the Christian church. Christ crucified, alone, is the power of God unto salvation. Now and then, indeed, in the course of three, four, five, six, or sometimes even ten or twelve years, these Shepherds of Christ’s flock parade through the country, paying their respects to the Great, and holding Confirmations ; but where is the Spirit of a Peter and a Paul to be discovered ? Or, to come nearer to what might be expected, where is the spirit of a Burnet*, a Leighton†, a Beveridge, a Hall, a Ken, a Bedell, a Reynolds, or a Wilson, to be seen ? Our Confirmations, and I may add, even our Ordinations† for the sacred minis-

* “This excellent man was extremely laborious in his episcopal office. Every summer he made a tour, for six weeks or two months, through some district of his bishopric, daily preaching and confirming from church to church, so as in the compass of three years, besides his triennial visitation, to go through all the principal livings of his diocese.”—See Biograph. Brit. art. Burnet, by Kippis, vol. iii. p. 29.

† Leighton was a most exemplary character, both in his private and public capacity. The life and writings of few men are more worthy of imitation and perusal. He laboured hard to bring about some reformation in the state of things in his own day, and when he found all his efforts ineffectual, he quietly withdrew, resigned his preferment, and lived in private. What Burnet says of him can never be too often repeated, and too generally known—“He had the greatest elevation of soul, the largest compass of knowledge, the most mortified and heavenly disposition, that I ever yet saw in mortal. He had the greatest parts, as well as virtue, with the most perfect humility that I ever saw in man ; and had a sublime strain in preaching, with so grave a gesture, and such a majesty both of thought, of language, and pronunciation, that I never once saw a wandering eye where he preached, and I have seen whole assemblies often melt in tears before him ; and of whom I can say with great truth, that in a free and frequent conversation with him for above two and twenty years, I never knew him say an idle word, that had not a direct tendency to edification ; and I never once saw him in any other temper but that which I wished to be in, in the last moments of my life.”

Mr. Locke gives us a similar account of Dr. Edward Pococke, “I can say of him what few men can say of any friend of theirs, nor I of any other of my acquaintance ; that I don’t remember I ever saw in him any one action, that I did, or could, in my own mind blame, or thought amiss in him.—Letter to Mr. Smith of Dartmouth.

* Bishop Burnet took large pains in preparing young people for

try, though good in themselves, appointed by the highest authority, and calculated to serve the interests of religion in no small degree, are dwindled into painful and disgusting ceremonies, as they are usually administered, to serious and enlightened minds. Besides, is it to be supposed, that the whole of a Bishop's business is to ordain ministers and hold confirmations, to spend their time in secular engagements, and to attend their place in the House of Lords? Is it for these purposes solely they are each of them paid by the public from two to twenty thousand pounds a year?

“ Good my brother,

Do not, as some ungracious pastors do ;
Shew me the steep and thorny way to heaven,
Whilst, like a careless libertine,
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads.”

Can we, or ought we to be surprised, that many of our worthy countrymen should be drawn aside into the paths of Infidelity, when it is considered what is the general conduct of our spiritual Superiors, and how the above sacred ordinances are frequently administered? Is it possible the Scriptures should be true, and our secular and luke-warm, our

Confirmation, and used every mean in his power to encourage and excite candidates for ordination to come with due qualifications. He complains, however, in the most affecting terms; of the low state in which they usually appeared before him. See the Preface to his Pastoral Care; the third edition. The state of things is not much improved since that great Prelate's day. We have at this time, indeed a very considerable number of men in the Establishment, of the utmost respectability both for learning, piety, and diligence in their calling; but, when we consider that the Clergy of this country, independent of Scotland and Ireland, are supposed to make as before noted a body of 18,000 men, the number of truly moral, religious, and diligent characters, is, comparatively, small. This is one main reason of the prodigious increase of Methodism; and for the same reason Infidelity is at this moment running like wildfire among the great body of the common people. There never was a time when there was a greater need of zeal, and humility, and condescension, and piety, and diligence, and attention to the grand peculiarities of the Gospel in our Bishops and Clergy, than in the present day. If we, as a great body of men paid by the State for the purpose, rouse not speedily from our supine condition, and come boldly and manfully forward—not in a fiery persecuting spirit, but in the spirit of our Divine Master—we shall neither have churches to preach in, nor people to preach to. Let the Bishops and Clergy of England look at their brethren in France—and arise—set out a new plan—or be for ever fallen!

negligent and unpreaching Bishops be in favour with the Divine Being? If they are in safety for a future state, surely religion must have changed its nature. Their episcopal conduct is the reverse of St. Paul's injunctions to Timothy, and the Bishops of the churches of Asia; to give themselves wholly to the work of the ministry, and to take heed to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers; to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. The Lord of the invisible world hath said, and he who hath the keys of death and of hell hath said: Strive to enter into the strait gate, for many shall seek to enter in and shall not be able: Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. If commands and declarations like these are true, then woe! woe! woe! to the Bishops of England! May we not say of them, with too general an application, but with some few honourable exceptions indeed, as good old Bishop Latimer said of his most reverend and right reverend brethren in his day:—"There is a gap in Hell, as wide as from Calais to Dover, and it is all filled with unpreaching Prelates*!"

* Latimer's words are:—"O that a man might have the contemplation of hell, that the devil would allow a man to look into hell, to see the estate of it:—if one were admitted to view hell thus, and beholding it thoroughly, the devil should say: On yonder side are punished unpreaching prelates: I think a man should see as far as a kenning, and perceive nothing but unpreaching prelates; he might look as far as Calais, I warrant you."—Sermon 8, vol. i. p. 155. Lond. 1791.

I will mention another anecdote to the same purpose:—A learned Friar in Italy, famous for his learning and preaching, was commanded to preach before the Pope at a year of Jubilee; and to be the better furnished, he repaired thither a good while before to Rome, to see the fashion of the Conclave, to accommodate his sermon the better. When the day came he was to preach, having ended his prayer, he, looking a long time about, at last cried with a loud voice three times—St. Peter was a Fool?—St. Peter was a Fool!—St. Peter was a Fool!—Which words ended, he came out of the pulpit. Being afterwards convented before the Pope, and asked why he so carried himself? He answered, Surely, Holy Father, if a priest may go to heaven abounding in wealth, honour and preferment, and live at ease, never or seldom to preach, then surely St. Peter was a Fool, who took such a hard way in travelling, in fasting, in preaching, to go thither.—Whiston's Memoirs of his own Life, p. 362.

Let not the reader suppose that I have any prejudice against a Bishop or a Clergyman, as such. There are some whose learning, piety, diligence, zeal, and talents, I prodigiously admire: and I myself am of the clerical order by the most conscientious choice*; but I cannot prevail upon myself to call things by wrong names, and to give flattering titles where it is plain they are not deserved. Gravely and seriously speak-

Most of our English Bishops are, at this day, in a very strong sense, unpreaching prelates. The Bishop of London, however, and some few more, are exceptions to this general rule. If the present times, and the awful predicament in which every Clergyman now stands, will not rouse us to a sense of danger, and a greater degree of zeal and diligence in our calling, we shall richly deserve our approaching, impending, inevitable fate, unless prevented by a speedy and effectual return to evangelical principles, and practices. The Gospel is either true or it is false. If it be false, let us cast off the mask, and appear in our true colours. If it be true, let us conduct ourselves as though we believed it to be so; and leave no stone unturned, no means untried, to promote its spread, and influence among the world in general, and among the people committed to our care in particular.

* How, it may be asked, can this declaration be reconciled with the result as contained in the second Appendix? Were we at liberty to consider the expression "clerical order," as referring to the ministerial office at large, unconfined to the particular denomination of the Church of England, the solution would not be difficult, since the Author himself, who was not of the Daubenian school, in that Appendix has made the obvious distinction between being a Minister of the gospel in, and out of, the establishment: for after having declared that he did not see how he could, "either in honour or conscience continue to officiate any longer as a Minister of the Gospel, in the establishment," he afterwards declares, "I think it necessary to say, that the doctrines I have preached for six and twenty years, I still consider as the truths of God.—I mean to preach the same doctrines, the Lord being my helper, during the whole remainder of my life, wheresoever my lot may be cast." Yet it must be admitted that the word "clerical," either in its strict and accepted use, or in the present connection, will scarcely bear this construction. We must therefore suppose, that when this sentence was written in the first edition, the Author's scruples had not then operated so powerfully as to lead him to the conclusion of renouncing his clerical character; and that when he revised this in the second edition, which is known to have been a considerable time before he wrote the appendix, either he overlooked it, which as his mind was so occupied with the subject is not improbable, or he then continued, on the whole, of the same sentiment, which was only altered by the gradual process of mature reflection, aided by firm integrity, and a sense of the propriety of a consistency of conduct; and this best accords with the view with which the second Appendix begins.—*Editor.*

ing then, I do conceive, that the number of clerical characters, who will be received with approbation by the Shepherd and Bishop of souls, in the great day of final retribution, will be small, comparatively speaking, extremely small.

I am sure appearances at present are against us. And I conceive all this is strongly implied in our Saviour's very solemn discourse to the Bishops and Clergy among the Jews in the twenty-third of St. Matthew, just before he left our world. In short:—

The Clergy of every country in Christendom have been, at the same time, the bane and the bulwark of religion: the bane, by their pride, misconduct, superstition, negligence, and spiritual domination; and the bulwark, by their piety, excellent learning, and admirable defences of the doctrines of religion, or the outworks of Christianity.

The fact is, the Popish clergy have preached and written so much in defence of the tripal tyrant, and the superstitions of their religion, that scepticism and infidelity almost universally prevail among thinking men of that denomination. The more eagerly the Clergy contend, the more mischief they do to their cause; for really the things for which they contend are not defensible.

We, of the English establishment, too, have so long boasted of the excellence of our church; congratulated ourselves so frequently upon our happy condition; paid ourselves so many fine compliments upon the unparalleled purity of our hierarchy; that a stranger would be led to conclude, to be sure we must be the holiest, happiest, and most flourishing church upon the face of the earth: Whereas, when you go into our most stately and magnificent cathedrals and other sacred edifices, you find them almost empty and forsaken.—At best all is deadness and luke-warmness both with priest and people*. In various instances, there is little more appear-

* Bishop Burnet says, "I have lamented, during my whole life, that I saw so little true zeal among our Clergy. I saw much of it in the Clergy of the Church of Rome, though it is both ill directed and ill conducted. I saw much zeal likewise throughout the foreign churches. The Dissenters have a great deal among them: but I must own, that the main body of our Clergy has always appeared dead and lifeless to me; and, instead of animating one another, they seem rather to lay one another asleep."—*Conclusion of the History of his Own Times.*

Let any discerning man take a candid, yet impartial survey of

ance of devotion than in a Jew's synagogue. Go where you will through the kingdom, one or the other of these is very generally the case, except where the officiating Clergyman is strictly moral in his conduct, serious, earnest and lively in his manner, and evangelical in his doctrines. Where this, however, happens to be so, the stigma of Methodism is almost universally affixed to his character, and his name is had for a proverb of reproach, in proportion to his zeal and usefulness, by the sceptics and infidels all around, in which they are frequently joined by the rich, the fashionable, and the gay, with the Bishop and Clergy at their head. How many such,

“ For their bellies sake,
Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold ?
Of other care they little reck'ning make,
Than how to scramble at the shearer's feast,
And shove away the worthy bidden guest ;
Blind mouths ! that scarce themselves know how to hold
A sheep-hook, or have learn'd aught else the least
That to the faithful herdsman's art belongs !
What recks it them ? What need they ? They are sped ;
And when they list, their lean and flashy songs
Grate on their scrannal pipes of wretched straw.

the Clergy, for a circuit of sixty miles round his own neighbourhood, and then let him say, whether the matter is mended since the time in which this good Bishop wrote these words. Let him attend the dissenting ordinations, and clerical meetings ; the Methodist conferences, and district meetings ; let him next proceed to our church confirmations, ordinations, and visitations ; and then let him say, on which side is to be found the greatest appearance of evangelical religion. Be it as it may with others, it is well known that our Confirmations, are frequently a burlesque, our Ordinations disorderly, and our Visitations riotous and intemperate. These are melancholy facts. The Parson and his Wardens must have a good soaking together once a year at least.

I observe, too, that for a circuit of many miles round our two English universities, a greater degree of ignorance and stupidity prevail among the common people than in most other parts of the country. This is a strange circumstance, but easily accounted for from the improper conduct of abundance of the Clergy and Gentlemen of those two seminaries of learning.

It holds equally true, that, all through the kingdom, wherever there is a Cathedral and a greater number of Parsons than ordinary, there is usually the least appearance of real religion among the people. The general lukewarmness of the Clergy is a curse to every neighbourhood where they abound ! It is the same in Catholic countries, and must be so, in the nature of things, through every country, unless we live in the spirit of the Gospel.

The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
 But swoll'n with wind, and the rank mist they draw,
 Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread :
 Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw
 Daily devours apace ; and nothing said,
 But that two-handed engine at the door,
 Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more."

These words of Milton are certainly severe, but yet not more so than the occasion deserves. If they were applicable in his day, it is to be feared they are not less so in the present. As a body, we are of all men in England the most inexcusable. The great mass of the people are going headlong to the devil in their sins ; the nation, because of its transgressions, is absolutely verging towards destruction ; and yet a vast majority of the 18,000 Parsons are insensible, both of the temporal and eternal danger, to which we, our people, and our country are exposed. If this censure seem intemperate, let any man prove that it is not just. I sincerely wish it were wholly undeserved. I know some good, useful, laborious, and honourable men, among the Clergy ; men, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose ; but I know also there is a very considerable number, who are—what shall I say?—Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon ; lest the sons of Infidelity rejoice ; lest the disciples of Thomas Paine triumph—they are exactly like the Parsons described by the Prophet, a little before the destruction of Jerusalem. His watchmen are blind : they are all ignorant ; they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark ; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs, which can never have enough ; and they are shepherds that cannot understand : they all look to their own way, every one for his gain from his quarter. Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink ; and to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant.

I have no pleasure, I say again, in exposing the nakedness of the established religion of my country, or in exciting against myself the indignation of my clerical brethren ; but the times are alarming, the great Head of the church is evidently displeased with us ; and there is now no mincing the matter any longer. We ought to examine the ground upon which we stand. If it be in any respect found untenable, we should change our measures, follow the determinations of Heaven ;

and by complying with its high behests, put ourselves under the guardian care of God. If without looking forward, or giving ourselves any concern what is right or what is wrong, we are determined to defend, through thick and thin, whatever in former ages has received the sanction of law, and, in our own day, the force of custom, we must take the consequences. We shall, most assuredly, in due time, share in the general wreck of the nations. I have no more doubt of this, than I have of the authority of the Sacred Writings.

The animosity and uncharitableness, which have evermore prevailed among the different denominations of Christians, is another cause of the growing Infidelity of the present age. It is not said now, as in the days of old, "See how these Christians love one another:"—but—"See how these Christians hate one another." Catholics damn Protestants, and Protestants revile Catholics.* One sect of Protestants

* What a horrible curse has Popery been to Christendom in point of population ! France alone, we have seen, before the Revolution, contained upwards of 366,000 secular and regular Clergy, besides an immense number of Nuns. This vast body of males and females were all enjoined, by the laws of the church, to continue in a state of celibacy. In the whole of Christendom there were no less than 225,444 monasteries about a century ago. How much greater the number before the Reformation ? Now reckon only twenty persons to one monastery, there must be, in these several sinks of sin and pollution (see Gavin's Master Key to Popery) upwards of 4,500,000 souls debarred from all the comforts of the married state, and living in direct opposition to the great law of nature—Increase and Multiply. Hasten the completion of the 1260 years, O God ! which thou hast determined for the reign of the Man of Sin ; and whatever it may cost us, let us see his destruction with our own eyes ; so will we praise thy name, and shout Hallelujah ! Hallelujah ! Babylon is fallen ! is fallen ! with concordant hearts and voices !

When William the Conqueror came over into England, he found about a third part of the lands in the possession of the Clergy.

Upwards of three thousand one hundred and eighty religious houses were suppressed by Henry VIII. and his predecessors.

It is computed that fifty thousand persons were contained in these several religious houses.

In some respects these religious institutions were useful, in others extremely pernicious.

Such a number of persons, living in a state of celibacy, when the country did not contain more than three or four millions of inhabitants, if so many, must have had a most pernicious effect upon its population.

The sum total of the clear yearly revenue of the several religious

anathematizes another sect; every one holding forth the peculiar doctrines of their own party as the truths of God, in

houses, at the time of their dissolution, of which we have any account, seems to have been, 140,785l. 6s. 3d. And as the value of money is now seven or eight times what it was in the days of Henry VIII. we cannot reckon the whole at less than a million sterling a year.

Besides this, there were many other religious foundations dissolved, of which we have no account. The plate and goods of different kinds, which came into the hands of the king at the same time, were of immense value.

A good general view of all these matters may be seen in an extract from Bishop Tanner's *Notitia Monastica*, in Mr. Justice Burn's *Ecclesiastical Law*, under the article *Monasteries*.[*]

[*] It cannot fail of being entertaining to the reader to be presented with the preamble of the statute for the dissolution of the smaller Monasteries, 27 Hen. VIII. c. 28, as extracted from the Parliament Roll, by Mr. Gwilym, vide his *Treatise on Tithes*, p. 23.) especially as it is not usually printed in our statute books.

“Forasmuch as manifest synne, vicious, carnal and abominable living, is daily used and committed, commonly in such little and small abbeys, priories, and other religious houses of monks, canons, and nuns, where the congregation of such religious persons are under the number of twelve persons, whereby the governors of such religious houses and their convent, spoyle, destroye, consume, and utterly waste, as well their churches, monasteries, priories, principal houses, farms, granges, lands, tenements and hereditaments, as the ornaments of their churches, and their goods and chattels, to the high displeasure of Almighty God, slander of good religion, and to the great infamy of the king's highness and the realm, if redress should not be had thereof. And albeit that many continual visitations have been heretofore had, by the space of two hundred years and more, for an honest and creditable reformation of such unthrifty, carnal, and abominable living, yet neverthesse little or none amendment is hitherto had, but their vicious living shamefully increaseth and augmenteth, and by a cursed custom so rooted and infected, that a great multitude of the religious persons in such small houses, do rather choose to rove abroad in apostacy, than to conform themselves to the observation of good religion; so that without such small houses be utterly suppressed, and the religious persons therein, committed to great and honourable monasteries of religion in this realm, where they may be compelled to live religiously, for reformation of their lives, the same else be no redress nor reformation in that behalf. In consideration whereof, the king's most royal majesty, being supreme head on earth, under God, of the church of England, dayly studying and devysing the increase, advancement, and exaltation of true doctrine and virtue in the said church, to the only glory and honour of God, and the total extirping and destruction of vice and sin, having knowledge that the premisses be true, as well by the accompts of his late visitations, as by sundry credible informations, considering also that

opposition to the peculiar doctrines of those who differ from them. It is needless to specify particulars. We have all been to blame. Instead of turning our zeal against the immoralities of the age, we have frequently turned it against men, who, in every moral and religious point of view, were, perhaps, better than ourselves. A spirit of infallibility, in a greater or less degree, pervades all parties. In this unchristian strife, the pure spirit of the Gospel has been banished from the great bodies of professors, and has taken up its abode among a few solitary individuals, dispersed through the several churches of Christendom. Men of discernment, seeing this to be the state of things through all denominations, are led to suppose that there is no truth among any of them. The fact, however, is directly the contrary. They have all gotten the saving truth, if they would hold it but in piety, charity, and righteousness. They all believe in the Saviour of the world. Let them only observe the moral and religious precepts of his Gospel, and I do not see what more is necessary to entitle them to our Christian regards. They may not come up to the full orthodox belief of the Gospel; but they are such characters as our Saviour himself would not have treated with severity. And until religion is reduced to the

diverse and great solemn monasteries of this realm, wherein (thanks to God) religion is right well kept and observed, be destitute of such full number of religious persons, as they ought, and may keep, hath thought good, that a plain declaration should be made of the premises, as well to the lords spiritual and temporal, as to other his loving subjects, the commons in this present Parliament assembled: whereupon the said lords and commons, by a great deliberation, finally be resolved, that it is, and shall be much more to the pleasure of Almighty God, and for the honour of this his realm, that the possessions of such small religious houses, now being spent, spoiled, and wasted for increase and maintenance of sin, should be used, and committed to better uses; and the unthrifty religious persons, so spending the same, to be compelled to reform their lives: And thereupon most humbly desire the king's highness that it may be enacted, &c."

It is singular that so very religious a prince, could in so short a time after this, consent to the total suppression of all those "great, honourable, and solemn monasteries, wherein (thanks to God) religion was so right well observed." With so much pure and disinterested zeal for true religion, and so little regard to his own interest, how can we account for this conduct? Why it seems all these monasteries, weary of their existence, humbly implored their own destruction, and Henry, poor man, what alternative had he, but to consent that it should be as they required.—*Editor.*

simple form in which he left it, there never will be an end to the bickerings and uncharitableness of party, and Infidelity will of course prevail.

The general wickedness and immoral conduct of Christians so called, is another grand cause of Infidelity. For let men profess what they will, they never can persuade any thinking person they believe their own principles, while they are seen to transgress every rule of moral and religious obligation, and, in various of their transactions between man and man, conducting themselves in a manner of which abundance of the Heathen, both ancient and modern, would be ashamed.

All these circumstances, with others of a similar kind, are the causes why so many persons are now found, who reject the divine mission of Jesus Christ.*

But, my Countrymen, can we justly argue from the abuse to the disuse? Is Jesus the most moral and divine of characters, an impostor, because many of his ministers and servants have proved unfaithful and treacherous? Were the other eleven Apostles all knaves and rascals, because Judas was a traitor? Are the eternal truths of the Gospel to be exploded, because men have been presumptuous enough to adulterate them with the profane mixtures of human ordinances†. Or doth our obstinacy alter the nature of evidence and render the situation of Unbelievers more secure? The course of things is fixed and unchangeable. The sun will shine, the fire will burn, water will drown, the wind will blow, time will fly, the tide will flow, maugre all the scepticism of Philosophers.

* Sir Isaac Newton is reported to have said that Infidelity will overrun Europe, before the millennial reign of Christ commences; The corruptions of religion in all the Christian Establishments cannot easily be purged away in any other manner. They must be subverted by violence and blood. There is much reason to fear it will be impossible to remove them in any other way. See Whiston's Essay on the Revelation of St. John, p. 321, edit. 1744. Dr. Hartley also seems to have been of the same opinion respecting the spread of Infidelity as Sir Isaac, in his Observations on Man, Part ii. sect. 81.

† "Who that ever really professed the Christian religion, from the times of the apostles to the present moment, ever considered it as a human establishment, the work of particular men or nations, subject to decline with their changes, or to perish with their falls?"—*Erskine*, p. 56.

The moral relations of things are not less invariable ; and our being inconsiderate enough to deny those relations, and the obligations that arise from them, will neither destroy them, nor render our situation more secure. My being so foolish as to reject the existence of God, and so infatuated as to suppose there is no Redeemer, no Sanctifier, no Heaven, no Hell, no Devil, no Soul, no Angel, no Spirit, and that the Bible is all a grievous imposition upon mankind, doth not prove, either that there is no God, or that there is no reality in the representation made by the Gospel*. Every man must allow, I think, that it is possible for the Almighty to reveal his will to the world, if he thinks proper so to do. It will be further granted, I suppose, that some revelation seems desirable to allay the fears, and confirm the hopes of men. If then it ever should be made, what stronger evidence could be produced of its coming from God, than that with which the pre-

* If the various opinions, sects and parties, which prevail among Christians are considered by Unbelievers as an objection to the Gospel itself ; let them call to mind, that there is not a smaller number of contradictory opinions prevalent among those who reject Christianity. This may be seen with strong conviction in Stanley's History of Philosophy, and in the Posthumous Works of the late King of Prussia.—The author of the Connoisseur hath thrown together a few of the Unbeliever's tenets, under the contradictory title of

THE UNBELIEVER'S CREED.

“ I believe that there is no God, but that matter is God, and God is matter ; and that it is no matter whether there is any God or not. I believe also, that the world was not made ; that the world made itself ; that it had no beginning ; that it will last for ever, world without end.

“ I believe that a man is a beast, that the soul is the body, and the body is the soul ; and that after death there is neither body nor soul.

“ I believe there is no religion ; that natural religion is the only religion ; and that all religion is unnatural. I believe not in Moses ; I believe in the first philosophy ; I believe not in the Evangelists ; I believe in Chubb, Collins, Toland, Tindal, Morgan, Mandeville, Woolston, Hobbes, Shaftesbury ; I believe in Lord Bolingbroke ; I believe not in St. Paul.

“ I believe not in revelation ; I believe in tradition ; I believe in the Talmud ; I believe in the Alcoran ; I believe not in the Bible ; I believe in Socrates ; I believe in Confucius ; I believe in Sanconiathon ; I believe in Mahomet : I believe not in Christ.

“ Lastly, I believe in all unbelief.”

sent Sacred Writings are attended? The very errors of professors, and the corrupt state of religion in every Christian country, are the literal accomplishment of several prophecies, and, of course, so far are they from being any just objection to the Gospel, that they are a strong proof of the Divine Mission of its great Author.

But could it even be solidly evinced, that Jesus was an impostor, that the Virgin Mary was a bad woman, that the Scriptures are false, and that the scheme of redemption therein contained is all a cunningly devised fable of these arch-deceivers, the Priests; yet still it is found true in fact, that a lively Believer in Christ Jesus, who hath done justly, loved mercy, and walked humbly with his God, is much happier than the most accomplished Infidel that ever existed, both in life, and at the approach of death. Turn back your attention to the complete man of the world, Earl Chesterfield: in him you see a finished character, all that rank, honour, riches, learning, philosophy can make us. But was he happy? Read his own account, and he confounded. And are you more at rest in your spirit? What is your life?—You eat, and drink, and sleep, and dress, and dance, and sit down to play. You walk, ride, or are carried abroad. You labour, toil, transact business. You attend the masquerade, the theatre, the opera, the park, the levee, the drawing-room, the card-table, the assembly, the ball, the club, the tavern. In what manner do you spend your time at any of these places? Why sometimes you talk; make your observations; look one upon another; dance, play, trifle like the rest of the triflers there. And what are you to do again tomorrow? The next day? The next week? The next year?—You are to eat, and drink, and sleep, and labour, and dance, and transact business, and dress, and play, engage in small talk, walk, ride, and be carried abroad again*.

* The man of fashion is well described by a late poet in the following humorous manner:

“What is a modern Man of fashion?

A man of taste and dissipation:

A busy man without employment,

A happy man without enjoyment.

Who squanders all his time and treasures,

On empty joys and tasteless pleasures:

Visits, attendance, and attention,

And courtly arts too low to mention.

And is this all? Was it for this immortal faculties were bestowed upon us? Miserable round of secular pursuits, and empty dissipation! If faith in the Bible be a deception, it hath at least the merit of being a comfortable and beneficial one. It rescues us from this pitiful way of spending our time and money; it enables us to abound in works of faith and labours of love; it excites us to live, in some degree, worthy of our high-raised expectations, and prepares us to die with a hope full of immortality. We quit the stage of life without a sigh or a tear, and we go wind and tide into the haven of everlasting rest.*

In sleep, and dress, and sport, and play,
 He throws his worthless life away;
 Has no opinion of his own,
 But takes from leading Beaux the ton:
 With a disdainful smile or frown
 He on the rif-raff crowd looks down:
 The world polite, his friends and he,
 And all the rest are Nobody!

Taught by the Great his smiles to sell,
 And how to write and how to spell;
 The Great his oracles he makes,
 Copies their vices and mistakes;
 Custom pursues, his only rule,
 And lives an ape, and dies a fool!"

* Not many men ever trifled more agreeably, and at the same time more perniciously, than Lawrence Sterne, the author of *Tristram Shandy*. Among the various beautiful and pathetic passages which occur in his volumes, he administers poison in a manner the most imperceptible and bewitching. Few writers ever more corrupted the public taste. He was a man of considerable, but peculiar talents, making great pretensions to sympathy, wit, benevolence, but with an heart in no small degree depraved. And as he had lived with the reputation of a wit, he was determined to die as such, even though he should sacrifice every appearance of Christian piety and decorum. Accordingly, when this clerical buffoon came to be in dying circumstances: perceiving death to make his advances upwards, raising himself and sitting up, he is said, either in a real or pretended rage, to have sworn at the sly assassin, that he should not kill him yet.

This remarkable circumstance, though not mentioned in his life, is, I believe, strictly true. It is only observed in general in the account prefixed to his works, that "Mr Sterne died as he lived, the same indifferent, careless creature; as a day or two before, he seemed not in the least affected with his approaching dissolution."

This brings to mind the case of another unhappy man who was a professed Atheist. Dr. Barraby, an eminent physician in London, was intimately acquainted with him: his name was——Str—t, Esq.

“ With us no melancholy void,
 No period lingers unemploy’d,
 Or unimprov’d below ;
 Our weariness of life is gone,
 Who live to serve our God alone,
 And only him to know.”

No man, however, can prove the falsehood of that inestimable Book. Difficulties, many and considerable, we know it contains. We are not disposed to conceal them. It would be very surprising if a book so circumstanced did not*. But its foundation is built upon the pillars of everlasting truth. Conscientious Unbelievers should examine those difficulties with calmness and patience. The whole collective evidence of the Gospel is very considerable, and requires time and application†. It is expected that they attend to the consistency,

After some time, he was seized with a violent fever, and sent for the Doctor; who came, and prescribed several medicines, but none of them took effect. At length he told him plainly, “ Sir, I know nothing more that can be done, you must die.” Upon this he clenched his fists, gnashed his teeth, and said with the utmost fury, “ God ! God ! I won’t die !” and immediately expired.

* “ It would be a miracle greater than any we are instructed to believe, if there were no difficulties in the Sacred Writings ; if a being with but five scanty inlets of knowledge, separated but yesterday from his mother earth, and to-day sinking again into her bosom, could fathom the depths of the wisdom and knowledge of the Lord God Almighty.”

All arts and sciences abound with difficulties, and a perfect knowledge of them is not to be attained without considerable labour and application ; why then should we expect that Theology, the first of sciences, and that to which all others ought to be subservient, should be without its abstrusities, and capable of being understood without labour and application of mind ? Nay, even that practical religion, which is required of the humblest followers of the Redeemer, requires a high degree of attention. Agonize to enter in at the strait gate, is the command of the Son of God. And did ever any labour more in the cause of virtue than Christ and his Apostles ?

† There are four grand arguments for the truth of the Bible. 1. The miracles it records. 2. The Prophecies. 3. The goodness of the doctrine. 4. The moral character of the penmen.

The miracles flow from Divine power ; the prophecies from Divine understanding ; the excellence of the doctrine, from Divine goodness ; and the moral character of the penmen, from Divine purity.

Thus Christianity is built upon these four immoveable pillars, the power, the understanding, the goodness, and the purity of God.

I add further ;

harmony, and connection of all its various parts ; the long chain of prophecies undeniably completed in it ; the astonishing and well attested miracles which attend it ; the perfect sanctity of its Author ; the purity of its precepts ; the sublimity of its doctrines ; the amazing rapidity of its progress ; the illustrious company of confessors, saints, and martyrs, who died to confirm its truth ; the testimony of its enemies ; together with an infinite number of collateral proofs and subordinate circumstances, all concurring to form such a body of evidence, as no other truth in the world can shew ; such as must necessarily bear down, by its own weight and magnitude, all trivial objections to particular parts*. They should consult the best books upon the subject, and call in the assistance of learned and disinterested men, who have made theological subjects their study. They should apply to them as they would to a Lawyer about an estate, or a Physician about their health. And they should make the investigation a matter of the most diligent enquiry†. Religion is

The Bible must be the invention, either of good men or angels, bad men or devils, or of God.

It could not be the invention of good men or angels, for they neither would nor could make a book, and tell lies all the time they were writing it, saying, Thus saith the Lord, when it was their own invention.

It could not be the invention of bad men or devils, for they would not make a book, which commands all duty, forbids all sin, and condemns their souls to hell to all eternity.

I therefore draw this conclusion.—The Bible must be given by Divine inspiration.

* See Bishop Porteus's Sermons, vol. i. p. 41, 42.

† Bishop Watson's Apology for Christianity, in answer to Mr. Gibbon ; and his Apology for the Bible, in answer to Thomas Paine, before mentioned, are admirably well calculated to remove a considerable number of difficulties attending the records of our salvation. Bishop Horne's Letters on Infidelity, are wisely suited to the same purpose. But he that is able and willing to examine thoroughly the grounds of his religion, should have recourse to Bishop Butler's Analogy of Religion, natural and revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature ; a work well adapted to give satisfaction to enquiring minds, upon the most important of all subjects, Religion. I need not say, that Grotius on the truth of Christianity, is an excellent little work. Doddridge's three Sermons, on the Evidence of Christianity, seem better suited to the understandings of common readers than almost any other. Lardner's Credibility ; Michaelis's Introduction to the New Testament ; and Paley's View of the evidences of Christianity, are all works of high

a serious thing. It is either all or nothing. A few pert objections, started in mixed company, or in a circle of friends

reputation. Beattie's Evidences of the Christian Religion, is a valuable small work. Baxter on the Truth of Christianity, is not to be answered. Edwards on the Authority, Style, and Perfection of Scripture, is very valuable. Gildon's Deist's Manual—Kidder's Demonstration of the Messias—Stillingfleet's Origines, Sacrae—Hartley on the Truth of the Christian Religion—Bryant's Treatise on the Authenticity of the Scriptures—Jortin's Discourse concerning the Truth of the Christian Religion—Delany's Revelation examined with Candour—Paschal's Thoughts on Religion—Young's Night Thoughts, and Centaur not Fabulous—Ditton on the Resurrection—Cure of Deism—Foster's Usefulness, Truth, and Excellency, of the Christian Revelation—Clarke's Truth and Certainty of the Christian Religion—Lally's Principles of the Christian Religion—Paley's Horæ Paulinæ—Bishop Squire's Indifference for Religion Inexcusable—Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity—Murray's Evidences of the Jewish and Christian Revelations—Chandler's Plain Reasons for being a Christian—Addison on the Truth of Christianity—Bishop Watson's Two Sermons and Charge—Sykes's Essay upon the Truth of the Christian Religion—Warburton's Divine Legation of Moses—Dr. Gregory Sharpe's Two Arguments in Defence of Christianity—Leslie's Short Method with Jews and Deists—Bishop Berkley's Minute Philosopher—Dr. Randolph's View of our Saviour's Ministry—Bishop Clayton's Vindication of the Histories of the Old and New Testament—Dr. Bell's Enquiry into the Divine Missions of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ—Lively Oracles, by the Author of the Whole Duty of Man—Boyle on the Style of the Holy Scripture—Macknight on the Gospel-actions as probable—West on the Resurrection—Lord Lyttleton on the Conversion of St. Paul—Le Pluche on the Truth of the Gospel—Socinus's Argument for the Authority of Holy Scripture—Bishop Chandler's defence of Christianity—Priestley's Letters to a Philosophical Ubeliever—Priestley's Evidence of Revealed Religion.—These are all works of some reputation. Several of them are unanswerable, and all contain more or less matter upon the truth of the Scriptures, that is useful and important. Many others have written upon the same subject, but these I have had an opportunity of perusing, and can recommend them every one, as containing much that is valuable. There is, however, one very small work more, which I would take the liberty of recommending to the common reader, because it is so plain, satisfactory, and concise; and that is Dr. David Jennings' Appeal to Reason and Common Sense for the Truth of the Holy Scriptures. For the compass of it, this is a very satisfactory performance. The whole is contained in two sermons of moderate length, and may be obtained for a very trifling sum. To these may be added Leland's Deistical Writers; a work of high and deserved reputation—Leslie's Truth of Christianity Demonstrated—Bishop Taylor's Moral Demonstration that the Religion of Jesus Christ is from God. Writings on these subjects of such universal importance are very numerous, and, indeed, it is scarcely possible they

over the glass, are indecent and despicable. Shameful herein is the conduct of many vain babblers. They should be excluded society. When the ancient Philosopher Anaxagoras had expressed in one of his books a doubt concerning the existence of God, the book was burnt by a public decree of his fellow-citizens, and he himself banished his country. These were Heathens and Republicans. What would they have said to the Philosophists of the present day? No person, we may venture to say, ever honestly examined the whole of the evidence for the truth of the New Testament, who did not find it satisfactory. Indeed, the Gospel itself is so pure*, that no decent man can reject it. Hence we find, it has ever been the custom of Unbelievers to attack the corruptions of religion, which more or less prevail in all countries; and, through the sides of those human appendages, to wound the cause of truth itself. These arts, however, are inconsistent with honour; and no person of the least integrity of mind can be capable of them. Modest men too, who have not thoroughly examined the arguments for and against Scripture, will be silent. If they cannot believe in Jesus, they will be extremely cautious upon what

can be too much so. It may be much questioned whether any objection whatever has been made to the great truths of Religion and the Sacred Writings, which has not been fairly and honestly answered in one or another of the above authors. But no writer has taken so much pains to state and answer Objections to the Scriptures, as Mr. Stackhouse in his *New History of the Holy Bible*. If the serious Reader finds himself pressed with difficulties, he will do well to apply to that great work, where he will find them exhibited at length, with such answers as are generally satisfactory.

To these it may be recommended to the serious reader to add Knox's *Christian Philosophy*, where he will find the internal evidence of Christianity insisted on pretty much at length. The work, however, does not appear to me altogether unexceptionable, though highly valuable. He seems to set the external and internal evidences of the Gospel too much in opposition one to the other.—There is, moreover, an asperity and superciliousness, on some occasions, in his expressions, which ill become the subject on which he writes, and which he very justly condemns in the late Bishop Warburton and others. The work, however, I trust, will do much good, by calling the public attention to inward religion.

* The reader may see the purity of the Gospel drawn out at length in Newcombe's *Observations on our Lord's Conduct*; Hunter's *Observations on the History of Jesus Christ*; and Harwood's *Life of Christ*.

ground they reject him. They will remember that Newton examined the evidence of his divine mission, and was satisfied; that Locke examined, and died glorying in his salvation. They will recollect that West, Jenyns, Littleton, and Pringle, were all at one time Unbelievers; all undertook, like wise men, to examine the grounds of their Infidelity; were all convinced that they had been dangerously mistaken; all became converts to the religion of the Son of God; and all died, declaring their belief in him, and expectations from him. Thomas Paine, therefore, and his humble followers, may abuse and misrepresent the facts and doctrines contained in the Sacred Code, as Bolingbroke, and other deistical, but immoral men, have frequently done, with learning and ability greatly superior; they may nibble at it, like the viper at the file in the fable; but they only display their own malignity, and want of solid information. It is not every dabbler in science that is qualified, either to vindicate or oppose the Bible with effect. Deep and various learning are necessary for this purpose. The experience of past ages might convince any man, that it will be found hard to kick against the pricks, and to resist the evidence with full satisfaction of mind. All bitter sarcasms, therefore, with which Infidels so unmercifully load the best of books*, are unbecoming, and should be suspended, lest they recoil upon their heads. It has stood the rude shocks of learned Jews and Heathens, Heretics and Unbelievers, of former ages, and it is not about to receive its death-wound from the feeble assaults which the present numerous set of Deists are capable of making upon it. We challenge all the Unbelievers in Christendom to account, upon any merely human principle, for the scriptural prophecies concerning the kingdoms of Israel, Judah, and Egypt; or concerning the cities of Tyre, Nineveh, Babylon, and Je-

* For most of the learning that is now in the world we are indebted to the Bible. To the same book likewise we are indebted for all the morality and religion which prevail among men. Nay, even the absurd tales and fables which we read in the writings of the ancient Greeks and Romans are nothing more than perversions of the several histories and characters recorded in the Old Testament. See Jortin's First Charge, vol. vii. of his Sermons.—Gale's court of the Gentiles; and Bryant's Mythology. Consult too Dryden's Preface to his *Religio Laici*.

rusalem. Nay, not to take so large a compass, but to bring the matter to one point, we defy any man, on simple human principles, to account for the present state of the Jews. Would we give ourselves time soberly to compare the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy with the history and dispersion of that extraordinary people, we could not fail of having our minds strongly impressed with conviction. This one argument is invincible, and not to be fairly got over by all the wit of man, as the late accomplished, but irreligious, Chesterfield, was honest enough to declare.*

But, if we turn from these prophecies to those which respect human redemption, and the Saviour of mankind, we shall find they are extremely remarkable and minute, and absolutely conclusive for the Messiahship of Jesus Christ, the son of Mary. We will consider the predictions and fulfilments at some length, and boldly appeal to the common sense and reason of the most prejudiced man upon earth, whether there be not something far beyond the mere powers of nature in these strange coincidences.

1. It was predicted, many centuries before it came to pass, that Messiah should come into the world for the redemption of human beings.—Messiah did come into the world, four thousand years after the first prediction was uttered†.

2. Messiah is frequently prophesied of under the character of him that was to come.—Jesus Christ is several times described in this form by the writers of the New Testament‡.

* See Jones's Life of Bishop Horne, p. 332.

† Gen. iii. 15; Isa. ix. 6, 7; Matt. i. 18—25. Dr. Eveleigh in his Sermons says very justly, "The great object of the prophecies of the Old Testament is the redemption of mankind. This, as soon as Adam's fall had made it necessary, the mercy of God was pleased to foretel. And, as the time of his accomplishment drew nearer, the predictions concerning it became gradually so clear and determinate, as to mark out with historical precision almost every circumstance in the life and character of infinitely the most extraordinary Personage, that ever appeared among men. Any one of these predictions is sufficient to indicate a prescience more than human. But the collective force of all taken together, is such, that nothing more can be necessary to prove the interposition of Omniscience, than the establishment of their authenticity. And this, even at so remote a period as the present, is placed beyond all doubt."—Sermon vi. p. 210.

‡ Compare Hab. ii. 3, 4; Psalm cxviii. 26; Isa. xxxv. 4; lix. 20;

3. In ancient times there were four monarchies in the world, one succeeding another, more famous than all the rest. It was foretold, that Messiah should appear under the last of them.—Christ was born after the destruction of the three first, and while the fourth was in all its glory*.

4. Messiah was to come among men before the destruction of the second temple.—Jesus Christ preached in that temple; and it was totally destroyed within forty years afterwards†.

5. Messiah was to come into the world before the dominion of the Jews was taken away.—Christ was born that very year when Augustus Caesar imposed a tax upon the Jewish nation, as a token of their subjection to the Roman government‡.

6. When Messiah should make his appearance among men, it was to be a time of general peace, after dreadful wars and convulsions.—When Jesus Christ came into the world, the Roman wars were just terminated, the temple of Janus was shut, and universal peace reigned through the empire§.

7. Messiah was to make his appearance among men, at a time when there should be a general expectation of him.—When Jesus Christ came into the world, all nations were looking for the advent of some extraordinary person||.

Ixii. 11; Dan. ix. 26; Zech. ix. 9; Mal. iii. 1; Matt. xi. 3; John i. 30; iv. 25; xi. 27; Acts xix. 4. See Chandler's Defence. ch. ii. sect. 1. p. 160—167.

* Compare Daniel ii. and. vii. with Luke ii. and iii.

† Compare Haggai ii. 7, with Matthew xxi. 23. See Josephus.

‡ Compare Genesis xlix. 10, with Luke ii. 1—7.

§ Compare Haggai ii. 6, 7, 9, with the Roman History of this period.

|| Compare Haggai ii. 7—9, with Matthew ii. 1—10, and John i. 19—45.

The Heathens, as well as the Jews, had a firm persuasion, that some extraordinary person should arise in the world about the time of our Saviour's birth. Suetonius says, "There was an old and fixed opinion all over the East, that it was decreed by heaven, that about that time some person from Judea should obtain the dominion over all."

Tacitus mentions the same prophecy, and almost in the same words:—"Most of the Jews had a persuasion, that it was contained in the ancient books of their priests, that at that very time the East should grow powerful, and some person from Judea should gain the dominion."

8. Messiah was to have existed with God before the foundations of the world were laid.—Jesus Christ was in the beginning with God, and by him the worlds were made.*

9. Messiah was to be one, who had been the fellow, the equal and the companion of the Almighty. Jesus Christ thought it not robbery to be equal with God, and was with him from eternity†.

10. Messiah was to be the Son of God.—Jesus Christ was confessedly the only-begotten Son of God‡.

11. Messiah was to have had an eternal, and ineffable generation.—Jesus Christ was the Son of God, prior to his being born of the Virgin Mary, in a way not to be explained by mortal man§.

12. Messiah was also to be the Son of Man. Jesus Christ sustained this character, and seemed to have a pleasure in being called by that name||.

13. Messiah was not to be born according to the ordinary course of nature, but to descend from a pure Virgin.—Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary**.

To these testimonies of the Scriptures and Heathen writers we may add that of Josephus, who says in his History of the Jewish War, b. vii. c. 12. "That which chiefly excited the Jews to the war against the Romans, was a dubious oracle, found in their Sacred Writings that about that time, one of them from their parts should reign over the world."

See this subject drawn out more at large by Mr. Charles Leslie, in his Short and Easy Method with the Jews, and again in his Truth of Christianity demonstrated. This last Treatise, together with his Short and Easy Method with the Deists, are absolutely conclusive in favour of the Gospel. One may defy the most subtile Deist in the world to refute those two treatises. They are indeed unanswerable, except by sneer and sarcasm.

* Compare Proverbs viii. 22, 23, with John i. 1—3; Colossians i. 16, 17.

† Compare Zechariah xiii. 7, with Phil. ii. 6, and John i. 1.

‡ Compare Psalm ii. 12; Proverbs xxx. 4; Hosca xi. 1; Matthew iii. 17; xvii. 5.

§ Compare Micah v. 2, with John i. 1.

|| Daniel vii. 13; Matthew viii. 20.

** Compare Genesis iii. 15; Isaiah vii. 14; and Jeremiah xxxi. 22; with Matthew i. 22, 23.—It would be well if the opposers of the supernatural incarnation of our Saviour, would soberly read over Dr. Clarke's very sensible discourse on the miraculous Birth of Christ, in the 5th volume of his Sermons. My own Essay on the Authenticity of the New Testament too may be consulted, especially the Addenda.

14. Messiah was to be the son of Abraham, the father of the faithful, and the friend of God.—Jesus Christ was sprung from that illustrious Patriarch*.

15. Messiah was to be the son of Isaac, and not of Ishmael.—Jesus Christ was sprung from Isaac, and not from Ishmael†.

16. Messiah was to be the son of Jacob, and not of Esau. Jesus Christ did descend from Jacob, and not from his brother Esau‡.

17. Jacob had twelve sons. Messiah was not to spring from any other of the twelve, but from Judah.—Jesus Christ claimed Judah as his ancestor in a direct line§.

18. Messiah was to be sprung from Jesse, the father of David, king of Israel.—Jesus Christ was his descendant||.

19. Jesse had eight sons. David was the youngest. From none of the seven elder, but from David alone was Messiah to derive his origin.—Jesus Christ was the son of David**.

20. Messiah was to be born in a poor and mean condition, when the family should be reduced to a very low estate.—Jesus Christ, both on his father and mother's side, was of very low and mean appearance, though descended from such illustrious ancestors††.

21. Messiah was to have a messenger going before him, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.—Christ had a messenger going before him, who fully bare witness to his pretensions‡‡.

22. The forerunner of Messiah was either to be Elijah himself, or one in the spirit of Elijah.—John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, was altogether in the spirit of that great prophet§§.

* Compare Genesis xxi. 1—12. with Matthew i. 1—16.

† Compare Genesis xvii. 16—21, with Matthew i. 1—16.

‡ Compare Genesis xxv. 24—34; xxvii. 27—29; xxviii. 13, 14; with Matthew i. 1—16.

§ Compare Genesis xlix. 8—12, with Matthew i. 1—16.

|| Compare Isaiah xi. 1, with Matthew i—16.

** Compare 1 Samuel xvi. 1—13; 2 Samuel vii. 12—15 Psalm lxxxix. 19—37; Matthew i. 1—16.

†† Compare Isaiah liii. 2; Luke i. 48, 52; ii. 7, 24.

‡‡ Compare Malachi iii. 1, with John i. 19—34. and iii. 26—36.

§§ Compare Malachi iv. with Mark i. 1—8.

23. The forerunner of Messiah was to preach in the wilderness, and to prepare the minds of the people for his coming. John the Baptist did preach in the wilderness of Judea, and professed himself to be sent to prepare the Jews for the advent of Christ*.

24. The forerunner of Messiah was to be considerably successful in his office.—John the Baptist was treated with great respect by his countrymen, and made large numbers of disciples†.

25. Messiah was not to be born at Jerusalem, the capital of his kingdom, but at Bethlehem, an obscure country village.—Jesus Christ was born at Bethlehem, by a very peculiar providence‡.

26. Messiah was to go down into Egypt, and to be called out from thence.—Jesus Christ went down into Egypt, soon after his birth, and was called out from thence by an angel of the Lord§.

27. Messiah was to be a preacher of the law of God to his countrymen in the great congregation.—Jesus Christ was indefatigable in his public ministrations, both in the temple, and in all other places, where the people were disposed to hear him||.

28. The tribes of Zebulon and Naphthali were first to be greatly distressed, and afterwards highly honoured and exalted, by the appearance of Messiah among them.—These tribes principally suffered in the first Assyrian invasion under Tiglath Pilezer, and were afterwards among the first that enjoyed the blessing of Christ's preaching the gospel, and exhibiting his miraculous works among them**.

29. Messiah was to converse and preach the gospel in the region of Galilee.—Jesus Christ lived and conversed so long in that obscure and despicable part of the land of Israel, that he was, by way of contempt, denominated the Galilean††.

* Compare Isaiah xl. 3—5, with Matthew iii. 1—16.

† Compare Isaiah xl. 3—5, with Luke iii. 21.

‡ Compare Micah v. 2, with Matthew ii. 2.

§ Compare Hosea xi. 1, with Matthew ii. 13—23. See too Whiston on Prophecy, pp. 12 and 52.

|| Compare Psalm xl. 9, 10, with the four gospels, *passim*.

** Compare Isaiah ix. 1—4; 2 Kings xv. 29; 1 Chron. v. 26, and Matthew iv. 12—16.

†† Compare Isaiah ix. 1, 2, with Matthew ii. 22, 23; and Matt. iv. 23, 25.

30. Messiah was to have a temple to which he should come, when he made his appearance in human flesh.—Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, claimed the temple of Jerusalem as his own, in a sense which no mere mortal could presume*.

31. Messiah was to be the servant of God, whose name is the Branch.—Jesus Christ was emphatically the Servant of God, and the Day-Spring from on high†.

32. Messiah is spoken of by the ancient Prophets under the characters of an Angel—a Messenger—a Redeemer—an Interpreter—One of a thousand—a Plant of renown—a Captain—the Beloved of God—the true David—Jesus Christ was all these, and whatever else was peculiar to the character of that august Being; as will more fully appear from the following instances‡.

33. Messiah was to be the Messenger of the Covenant between God and his people.—Jesus Christ was that Messenger§.

34. Messiah was to sustain the office of a Prophet, when he came to redeem mankind.—Jesus Christ sustained that office in all its extent.||

35. Messiah was also to sustain the office of a Priest when he appeared upon earth.—Jesus Christ was a Priest, and offered, not indeed the blood of bullocks and of goats, but his own most precious blood**.

36. Messiah, though a Priest, was not to be of the tribe of Levi, and after the order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchizedec.—Jesus Christ was of the tribe of Judah, and

* Compare Malachi iii. 1, with Luke ii. 49; and Matthew xxi. 12, 13.

† Compare Isaiah iv. 2; xi. 1; Jeremiah xxiii. 5; Zechariah iii. 8; vi. 12; Isaiah xlii. 1; Matthew xii. 18; and Luke i. 78.—It should be observed here, that the word translated Branch signifies also the East, or Day-Spring.

‡ Compare Genesis xlviii. 16; xxxii. 24—30; Hosea xii. 3, 4; Exod. xxiii. 20—23; Malachi iii. 1; Job xix. 25; xxxiii. 23; Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24, 29; Joshua v. 13, 14; Isaiah xlii. 1; Rev. i. 1; Matthew iii. 17; Hebrews ii. 10.

§ Compare Jeremiah xxxiii. 20, 21; Malachi iii. 1; Isaiah lxiii. 9; Hebrews viii. 7—13; x. 9; xiii. 20, 21.

|| Compare Deuteronomy xviii. 15, 18; Acts iii. 22; Luke xxiv. 19; Matthew xxiv.

** Compare Zechariah vi. 13; Hebrews ix. 11—14.

had an everlasting priesthood, after the order of Melchizedec*.

37. Messiah was, moreover, to sustain the office of a King, when he took on him human nature for the salvation of his elect.—Jesus Christ was a King, even while upon earth; and, now that he is in heaven, his dominion extends over all worlds†.

38. Messiah was to be a righteous King, and emphatically the Prince of Peace.—Jesus Christ was eminently distinguished as a righteous person, and the great peace-maker both on earth and in heaven‡.

39. The kingdom of Messiah was to be universal and everlasting—Jesus Christ has a kingdom, that, in due time, shall be universal in its extent, and eternal in its duration§.

40. Messiah was to be the Sun of Righteousness, who should arise upon the world with salvation in his rays.—Jesus Christ was the Light of the world, who illuminateth every man that cometh into it.

Messiah was also to be the East, or Morning Star.—Jesus Christ is called the Day-spring from on high, and the bright and Morning Star||.

41. Messiah was to be emphatically the Just-One.—Jesus Christ not only answered the description, but is repeatedly called by that name**.

42. Messiah, to whom belonged the land of Judea, was to be denominated Emmanuel.—Jesus Christ was the proprietor of that holy land, and was expressly called by the name of Emmanuel††.

* Compare Genesis xiv. 18; Psalm cx. 4; Hebrews vi. 20; vii. 1—28.

† Compare Psalm ii. 6; Zechariah vi. 13; ix. 9; with Luke i. 32, 33; John xxiii. 86, 37; and Rev. xix. 16.

‡ Compare Isaiah xxxii. 1; Psalm xlv. 1—17; lxxii. 1—19; Jeremiah xxiii. 5; Zechariah ix. 9; Isaiah ix. 6; Luke ii. 14; Ephes. ii. 4—22.

§ Daniel vii. 27; Luke i. 32, 33; Rev. v. 12—14.

|| Compare Malachi iv. 2; John i. 5, 9; viii. 12; ix. 5; xii. 35, 46; Isaiah lx. 1, 2; Luke. i. 78; and Rev. xxii. 16.

** 2 Samuel xxiii. 3; Isaiah xi. 5; Acts iii. 14; vii. 52; xxii. 14.

†† Compare Isaiah vii. 14; viii. 8; Matthew i. 23; and John i. 11.

43. Messiah was to be a great Shepherd, and to lay down his life for the sheep.—Jesus Christ was the great and good shepherd, and shed his blood in defence of his flock*.

44. Messiah was not only to be a righteous King, and execute judgment and justice in the earth; but his name was to be Jehovah our righteousness.—Jesus Christ is made of God righteousness to every one that believes in his name†.

45. Messiah was to be, like the lion, which is the king of animals, of a noble and generous spirit.—Jesus Christ was the lion of the tribe of Judah‡.

46. Messiah was to be anointed with the Holy Ghost in a larger degree than any other man ever was.—Jesus Christ was favoured in this respect beyond all other persons that ever lived§.

47. Messiah was to be of a meek and lowly disposition humbling himself for the redemption of the world.—Jesus Christ was meek and lowly in mind, and answered the prophetic description in every respect.

48. Messiah was to teach mankind the doctrines of salvation without ostentation and noise.—Jesus Christ was quiet and unambitious in all his public as well as private deportment**.

49. Messiah was to be endowed with a peculiar degree of wisdom and understanding.—Jesus Christ, his enemies being judges, spake as never man spake, and taught a more pure and excellent doctrine than ever had been received among mankind before††.

50. The doctrine of Messiah was to be of the most healing, encouraging, and consolatory kind.—The doctrine

* Compare Zechariah xiii. 7; Isaiah lx. 11; and Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24; with John x. 1—18.

† Compare Jeremiah xxiii. 5, 6, with 1 Corinthians i. 30.

‡ Compare Genesis xlix. 9; and Rev. v. 5.

§ Compare Psalm xlv. 7; with Matthew iii. 16, 17; and John iii. 34.

|| Compare Zechariah ix. 9; Matthew xi. 28, 29; John xiii. 1—17; 2 Corinthians viii. 9.

** Compare Isaiah xlii. 1—4; Matthew xii. 14—21.

†† Compare Isaiah xi. 1—5; John vii. 46; Matthew xiii. 54—58; Matthew v. vi. and vii. ch.

of Jesus Christ was singularly adapted to the healing of wounded minds*.

51. The doctrine which Messiah should preach was to have a powerfully transforming influence upon the minds of men.—The Gospel of Christ had all this effect upon the dispositions and conduct of every one of his genuine disciples†.

52. Messiah was to be peculiarly kind and affectionate to young distressed, and tender-spirited persons.—Jesus Christ was singularly attentive to all such characters‡.

53. In confirmation of his divine mission, Messiah was to display many wonderful works among the people.—Jesus Christ wrought abundance of miracles in confirmation of his pretensions, and the doctrines he taught§.

54. Messiah was to have but little success in preaching the Gospel among his countrymen the Jews.—Jesus Christ was almost universally rejected by them||.

55. The minds of the Jews were to be so veiled that they should not know their Messiah when he came among them.—The minds of the Jews were so sealed up and enveloped in prejudice against Jesus Christ when he appeared, that he was treated by them as an impostor and deceiver**.

56. Messiah was to be the chief corner stone in the building of his church, elect, precious.—Jesus Christ was the chief corner stone, elect, and precious††.

57. Messiah was to be rejected by the builders, but yet made the head stone in the corner.—Jesus Christ was almost universally rejected by the great men of his nation; but yet he was made both Lord and Christ‡‡.

58. Messiah was to preach the gospel to the poor, and to be embraced by a considerable number of that description

* Compare Isaiah lxi. 1—3; Matthew xi. 28—30; John xiv. 1—3.

† Compare Isaiah xi. 6—8; with Acts ii. 41—47.

‡ Compare Isaiah xl. 11; lv. 1—3. lxi. 1—3; Matthew xii. 20; and Mark x. 13—16.

§ Compare Isaiah, xxxv. 5, 6; with Matthew viii, and ix. chapters, and John xxi. 25.

|| Compare Isaiah liii. 1; xlix. 4; Rom. x. 1, 3, 21.

** Compare Isaiah vi. 9—13; xxix. 9—14; 2 Cor. iii. 5—18.

†† Compare Isaiah xxviii. 16; Acts iv. 11, 12; 1 Peter ii. 6—8.

‡‡ Compare Psalm cxviii. 22; Isaiah viii. 13, 14; John vii. 48; Matthew xi. 25, 26; 1 Corinthians i. 26—31; 1 Peter ii. 7, 8.

—Jesus Christ preached the gospel to the poor, and various of that rank believed in his name*.

59. Messiah was to be despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.—Jesus Christ was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief†.

60. Messiah was to be seen riding into Jerusalem, sitting upon a young ass; as a token of the humility of his mind.—Jesus Christ answered this prediction, as well as every other that went before concerning him, in the most minute circumstance‡.

61. When Messiah should enter Jerusalem in his meek and humble manner, great crowds of the common people should welcome him with shouts and rejoicings. When Jesus Christ rode into that proud metropolis in low disguise, the general cry of the mob was, Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest§.

62. Messiah was to be actuated with such a burning zeal for the house of God, as even to be endangered by it.—Jesus Christ displayed that zeal upon various occasions||.

63. Messiah was to be betrayed into the hands of his enemies by the treachery of an intimate friend.—Christ was betrayed by one of the disciples whom he had chosen**.

64. Messiah was to be sold for thirty pieces of silver, Jesus Christ was sold for the sum predicted††.

65. Messiah's price, the thirty pieces of silver, was to be cast to the potter in the house of the Lord.—All this was done when Judas betrayed his Master‡‡.

66. Messiah was to be condemned in judgment, and suffer death under the colour of public justice.—Jesus Christ

* Compare Isaiah lxi. 1; Luke iv. 18; Matthew xi. 5; James ii. 5.

† Compare Isaiah liii. with Matthew xxvi. and xxvii. chapters, and Phil. ii. 7, 8. See too Chandler's defence, p. 178—194.

‡ Compare Zechariah ix. 9, with Matthew xxi. —11.

§ Ibid. See Chandler's defence, p. 102—107.

|| Compare Psalm lxix. 9; John ii. 17.

** Compare Psalm xli. 9; lv. 12, 13; Mat. xxvi. 47—50.

†† Compare Zechariah xi. 12; Matthew xxvi. 14—16.

‡‡ Compare Zechariah xi. 13; Matthew xxvii. 3—10.

underwent a mock trial, was declared innocent by his very judge, and yet delivered over to be crucified*.

67. The followers of Messiah were all to forsake him in the time of his greatest need.—When Jesus Christ was apprehended, and put upon his trial, all his disciples forsook him and fled†.

68. Messiah was to finish his public employment, in confirming the covenant, in about three years and a half. Jesus Christ began his public office at thirty years of age, and was put to death at thirty-three and a half‡.

69. Messiah was to be ignominiously scourged by his persecutors.—Jesus Christ was treated in this manner§.

70. Messiah was to be smitten on the face in the day of his humiliation.—Jesus Christ was basely buffeted by the hands of vile slaves||.

71. Messiah was to have his face befouled with spittle.—Jesus Christ condescended for our sakes even to this indignity without complaining**.

72. Messiah was to be wounded in his hands, even by his own friends.—Jesus Christ had his hands nailed to the cursed tree by his own countrymen††.

73. Messiah was to be so marred and disfigured in his visage by the ill treatment he should receive, that his friends would scarce know him.—And was not Jesus Christ so disfigured and despoiled‡‡?

* Compare Isaiah lix. 8, 9; Matthew xxvii. chapter.

† Compare Zechariah xiii. 7; Isaiah lxiii. 5; Matthew xxvi. 56.

‡ Compare Daniel ix. 27, with the period of our Lord's ministry in the four Gospels. On this remarkable prediction of Daniel, consult MacLaurin's Essay on the Prophecies, p. 103 [*], and Sir Isaac Newton's Observations on Daniel, chap. x. 11.

[*] This excellent work may be purchased at a cheap rate at Bayen's, Paternoster-row.

§ Compare Isaiah l. 6, with Matthew xxvii. 26.

|| Compare Isaiah l. 6, lii. 14; Micah v. 1; and Matthew xxvi.

67.

** Compare Isaiah l. 6; Matthew xxv. 67.

†† Compare Zechariah xiii. 6, with John xx. 27.

‡‡ Compare Isaiah lii. 14; with Matthew xxvii. 29, 30.—If it should be objected that several of these circumstances are trifling and unworthy of the Spirit of prophecy to reveal, it may be very justly answered, that, "The more minute some of these circumstances are in themselves, the greater and more convincing is the evidence of divine fore-knowledge in the prediction of them; because the

74. Messiah was to be oppressed and afflicted, and yet not open his mouth in complaint. He was to be brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he was not to open his mouth.—Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world, before Pilate held his peace. And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing*.

75. Messiah was to be taken up with wicked men in his death.—Christ was suspended on a cross between two thieves†.

conformity between the prediction and the history is so much the more circumstantial."

See Maclaurin on the Prophecies, p. 63.

* Compare Isaiah liii. 7, with Matthew xxvi. 63, and xxvii. 12—14.

† Compare Isaiah liii. 9, with Matthew xxvii. 38, 60.

See on this whole chapter Aphthorp's seventh discourse on prophecy, and Dr. Gregory Sharp's Second Argument in defence of Christianity, p. 222—274. A comparison of this 53d chapter of Isaiah with the account given in the four Evangelists of the sufferings of Christ was made the instrument of convincing the witty and wicked Earl of Rochester. The narrative given of this remarkable transaction by Bishop Burnet, is worth insertion in this place:—Rochester said to Bishop Burnet, "Mr. Parsons, in order to his conviction, read to him the 53d chapter of Isaiah and compared that with our Saviour's passion, that he might there see a prophecy concerning it, written many ages before it was done; which the Jews that blasphemed Jesus Christ, still kept in their hands as a book divinely inspired. He said to me—that, as he heard it read, he felt an inward force upon him, which did so enlighten his mind, and convince him, that he could resist it no longer: or the words had an authority, which did shoot like rays or beams in his mind, so that he was not only convinced by the reasonings he had about it, which satisfied his understanding, but by a power, which did so effectually constrain him, that he did ever after as firmly believe in his Saviour as if he had seen him in the clouds. He had made it to be read so often to him, that he had gotten it by heart; and went through a great part of it in discourse with me, with a sort of heavenly pleasure, giving me his reflections upon it. Some few I remember: Who hath believed our report? Here, he said, was foretold the opposition the gospel was to meet with from such wretches as he was. He hath no form or comeliness; and when we shall see him there was no beauty, that we should desire him. On this he said the meanness of his appearance and person has made vain and foolish people disparage him, because he came not in such a fool's coat as they delight in. What he said on the other parts, I do not, says the Bishop, well remember." Sharpe's Second Argument, p. 238—240.

76. Messiah was to be buried in the sepulchre of a rich man.—Christ was buried in the tomb of a rich counsellor*.

77. Messiah was to be put to death at the end of 490 years, from the time when a commandment should go forth to restore and to build Jerusalem.—Now it is remarkable, that from the seventh year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, king of Persia, from whom Ezra received his commission, ch. vii. 8, to the death of Jesus Christ, there are just 490 years†.

78. Messiah was to be presented by his enemies with vinegar and gall during his sufferings.—In this manner was Jesus Christ treated, as he hung upon the cross‡.

79. The persecutors of Messiah were to pierce his hands and his feet.—So did the bloody Jews and Romans treat the Redeemer of mankind§.

80. The enemies of Messiah were to laugh him to scorn, and to taunt and reproach him with sycarical language.—So did the Jews conduct themselves towards Christ in the day of his distress||.

81. When Messiah was put to death, his enemies were to part his garments among them, and for his vesture they were to cast lots.—When Christ was crucified, these transactions took place**.

82. When the Messiah should suffer death, not a bone of his body was to be broken.—When Christ was crucified, not a bone of him was injured††.

83. When Messiah should be put to death, his side was, by some means, not declared to be pierced.—When Jesus Christ was crucified, his side was pierced with a spear‡‡.

* Compare Isaiah liii. 9, with Matthew xxvii. 38, 60.

† Daniel ii. 24. See Sykes's Essay on the Truth of the Christian Religion, p. 20. And for the times of the birth and passion of Christ, consult the 11th chapter of Sir Isaac Newton's Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel.

‡ Compare Psalm lxxix. 21, with Matthew xxvii. 34, and John xix. 28,—30.

§ Compare Psalm xxii. 16. with Matthew xxvii. 35—Crucifixion was a thing not known among the Jews in the time of David, nor for many ages afterwards.

|| Compare Psalm xxii. 7, 8, with Matthew xxvii. 39—44.

** Compare Psalm xxiii. 18, with Matthew xxvii. 35.

†† Compare Exodus xii. 45, and Numbers ix. 12, with John xvi. 31—36.

Compare Zechariah xii. 10, with John xix. 34, 37.

84. It was prophesied of **Messiah**, that he should make intercession for transgressors.—**Jesus Christ** interceded with **God** for his very murderers, and now ever liveth at his Father's right hand to plead the cause of the sinful children of men*.

85. **Messiah** was to be cut off, but not for himself.—**Jesus Christ**, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, was cut off by the hands of wicked men, to reconcile **God** to his rebellious creatures†.

86. When **Messiah** should come, there was to be a fountain opened to the house of **David**, and to the inhabitants of **Jerusalem**, for sin and for uncleanness.—When **Christ** came, he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and by the shedding of his blood once for all‡.

87. **Messiah** was to make atonement for the iniquities, transgressions, and sins of the world.—**Jesus Christ** was a propitiation for the sins of the whole world§.

88. **Messiah** was to make this atonement in the last of **Daniel's** seventy weeks.—**Jesus Christ** was crucified in that very week||.

89. **Messiah** was to abolish the old, and introduce a new dispensation.—**Jesus Christ** abolished the ceremonies of the **Law of Moses**, and brought in a more perfect and rational œconomy¶.

90. The blood of **Messiah** was to be the blood of the co-

* Compare **Isaiah** liii. 12; **Hebrews** vii. 25.

† Compare **Daniel** ix. 26; **Isaiah** liii. 8; **Matthew** xxvi. and xxvii. chapters.

‡ Compare **Zechariah** xiii. 1; and **Hebrews** ix. and x. chapters.

§ Compare **Isaiah** liii. 5; **Daniel** ix. 24; **1 John** ii. 1, 2.

|| **Daniel** ix. 27. See this remarkable prophecy of **Daniel** illustrated at large in **Prideaux**, p. 1, b. v. Consult also the fourth and fifth of **Aphthorp's Discourses**, and **Chandler's Defence**, p. 132—150 —“The doctrine of atonement,” says **Bishop Sherlock**, “is that which, together with the principles on which it is founded, and the consequences naturally flowing from it, distinguishes the **Christian religion** from all other religions whatever.”

Sermons, vol. iv. dis. iii. p. 88.

The present excellent **Bishop of London** also tells us, “It is without dispute, the great distinguishing character of the **Christian dispensation**, the wall of partition between natural and revealed religion, is the main foundation of all our hopes of pardon and acceptance hereafter.”

¶ Compare **Jeremiah** xxxi. 31—34, with **Hebrews** viii. 6—13.

venant, which should bring prisoners out of the pit where there is no water.—The blood of Jesus Christ was the blood of the new covenant-dispensation, which, whosoever disregards, shall bear the blame for ever*.

91. Messiah was not to lie in the grave and be turned to corruption like other men.—Jesus Christ did not continue in the grave, nor did he see corruption like the rest of mankind†.

92. Messiah was to be raised from the grave on the third day after of his interment.—Jesus Christ was buried on the Friday, and rose from the dead on the Sunday morning following‡.

93. When Messiah should arise from the dead, he was to bring some tokens with him of his victory over the infernal powers. When Jesus Christ entered the state of the dead, he led captivity captive, unloosed the bands of death, and raised many bodies of the saints, which were confined under his dominions§.

94. Messiah was to ascend up into heaven, and reign there at his Father's right hand, invested with universal dominion.—Jesus Christ did ascend up into heaven in the sight of many witnesses, and took his place at the right hand of power, invested with universal dominion||.

95. When Messiah ascended into heaven, his ascension was to be attended with the ministers of heaven, to usher him into his Father's presence.—When Jesus Christ ascended up into heaven, two men stood by the Apostles in white apparel, and addressed them on the joyful occasion¶.

96. Messiah was to send down from heaven the gift of the Holy Ghost, as a token and pledge that he was exalted, and

* Compare Zechariah ix. 11, with Hebrews x. 29; xiii. 20.

† Compare Psalm xvi. 10, with Matthew xxviii. 6.

‡ Compare Hosea vi. 2; Matthew xx. 19; Matthew xxvii. 1—7; 1 Corinthians xv. 4.

§ Compare Psalm lxviii. 18, with Matthew xxvii. 52.

|| Compare Psalm xvi. 11; lxviii. 18; Isaiah ix. 6, 7; Luke xxiv. 50, 51; Acts i. 9; and Matthew xxviii. 18.

The excellent Tillotson observes, that "all things which the Prophets had foretold concerning the Messiah were punctually made good in the person, and actions, and sufferings of our Saviour."—Sermon 104.

¶ Compare Daniel vii. 13, 14, with Acts i. 10, 11.

that his Father was pleased with what he had done upon earth for the redemption of his people.—Jesus Christ sent down the gift of the Holy Ghost, in the most conspicuous and miraculous manner*.

97. The doctrine of Messiah was to begin to be preached at Jerusalem, and from thence to spread itself through the nations.—The gospel of Christ was first preached in that city, and actually dispersed itself through all the neighbouring countries in the course of a few years†.

98. Though Messiah was to be generally rejected and despised in his life-time; after his death the pleasure of the Lord, in the conversion and salvation of mankind, was to prosper in his hand.—How exactly these circumstances agree with the history of Jesus Christ, is well known to every Christian‡.

99. The followers of Messiah should meet with great and severe trials and persecution for their adherence to his

* Compare Psalm lxxviii. 18; Joel ii. 28—32, with Acts ii. 1—4, and Ephes. iv. 8—12.

“When our Lord, after his resurrection, beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, had expounded unto his Apostles in all the scriptures the things concerning himself, and opened their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures: Luke xxiv. 27, 45; then they saw plainly (and any one now, who will trace the whole thread of the Old Testament, may plainly see) that there is a continued series of connexion, one uniform analogy and design, carried on for many ages by divine prescience through a succession of prophecies; which, as in their proper centre, do all meet together in Christ, and in him only, however the single lines, when considered apart, may many of them be imagined to have another direction, and point to intermediate events. Nothing is more evident, than that the whole succession of prophecies can possibly be applied to none but Christ. Nothing is more miraculous, than that they should all of them be capable of being possibly applied to him. And whatever intermediate deliverances or deliverers of God’s people may, seemingly or really be spoken of upon particular occasions, nothing is more reasonable than to believe (in the Apostle’s certainty, who conversed personally with our Lord after his resurrection, nothing could be more reasonable than to believe) that the ultimate and general view of the prophetic Spirit always was fixed on him, of whom in some of the ancient prophecies it is expressly affirmed, that God’s servant David shall be the Prince over his people for ever; that his dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away; and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”

Clarke’s Sermon’s vol. v. ser. 1.

† Compare Isaiah ii. 1—4; Micah iv. 1—4; with Acts 2d chapter, and Romans x. 18.

‡ Isaiah liii. 10—12.

cause.—The followers of Jesus Christ had the whole world in arms against them for several ages*.

100. The rejecters of Messiah should be rejected of God, and his followers called by another name.—The Jews, who would not have Christ to rule over them, were rejected by him, and his followers were called by another name, through divine appointment, as it should seem, to accomplish this prophecy†.

101. Messiah was to be opposed by kings, and persons in authority, with great vigour and resolution. Jesus Christ was very generally opposed, through the whole of his public ministry, by the great Ones of the world, and all the power of the Roman empire was in opposition to his cause and people for upwards of three hundred years‡.

102. Notwithstanding the opposition of the kings and princes of the world for a season, the time was to come when kings should be nursing fathers to the church, and queens nursing mothers.—Most of the governors of the nations of Europe have been protectors of the cause of Christ now for many centuries§.

103. It was upon a great variety of occasions predicted, that Messiah should enlighten the Gentile nations with the knowledge of the true God.—Jesus Christ gave particular commandment to his Apostles, no longer to confine their ministrations to the Jews, as he had done during his life-time; but to go out into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature||.

104. Messiah was to destroy the covering of the face which was cast over all people, and the vail which was spread over all nations.—When Jesus Christ appeared, he, by his Word, Spirit, and Apostles, enlightened the minds of men, and effected a most surprising change in all the nations where his gospel was received¶.

* Compare Isaiah lxxv. 5. and Malachi iii. 1—3, with Matthew x 16—18, and 1 Corinthians iv. 9.

† Compare Isaiah lxxii. 2; lxxv. 15, with Acts. xi. 26.

‡ Compare Psalm ii. 2; cx. 5, 6; Luke xxiii. 8—12. See the History of the Church for the First Three Centuries.

§ Isaiah xlix. 23; lx. 3.

|| Compare Isaiah lx. with Mark xvi. 15.

¶ Compare Isaiah xxv. 6—8; Acts ii. 1—11; xxvi. 17, 18.

105. To Messiah every knee was to bow, every tongue to swear, and every heart to submit.—The whole Christian world, professedly at least, pay this obedience to Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of souls, and to no other being whatever.—And in due time all opposing power shall be everlastingly annihilated*.

106. It was predicted, that all the enemies of Messiah, should be ashamed and confounded.—Jesus Christ has already made an awful example of his enemies, the Jews; first, in the destruction of their city and temple; secondly, in their present dispersion: and, in the proper season, every imposing power shall be brought into subjection†.

107. It was predicted that Messiah would make a great and visible difference between his believing and unbelieving countrymen.—When the Romans besieged Jerusalem, near two millions of unbelieving Jews perished, while every single believer fled out of the city, and escaped in safety to the mountains‡.

108. Messiah was to appear in the world at the consummation of the ages, to raise mankind from the dead, and judge the human race in righteousness.—Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life, shall appear again at the close of nature, and decide the final fates both of men and angels§.

109. Messiah was to destroy death itself, triumph over the grave, and create new heavens and a new earth, wherein should dwell universal righteousness.—Jesus Christ is he who alone is equal to the mighty undertaking, and is divinely appointed to that office||.

This is a concise view of the predictions contained in the Old Testament, concerning the nature, birth, life, doctrine,

* Compare Psalm cx. 1; Isaiah xlv. 25; 1 Corinthians xv. 24—28; and Phillippians ii. 10, 11.

† Compare Psalm ii. 9; Psalm cx. 1; Isaiah xlv. 34; liv. 17; lx. 12; with Matthew xxiv; 2 Thes. i. 7—9; and the History of the Jews.

‡ Compare Malachi 3d and 4th chapters, with the History of that remarkable siege.

§ Compare Job xix. 23—27; Isaiah xxv. 8; Daniel xii. 1—3; Hosea xiii. 14; Micah ii. 13; Matthew xxv. 31—46; John xi. 25; Acts xvii. 30, 31; 1 Corinthians vi. 5; 2 Corinthians v. 10.

|| Compare Hosea xiii. 14; Isaiah lxv. 17; lxvi. 22; 1 Corinthians xv. 54, 54; Revelations xx. 14; xxi. 4.

suffering, death, resurrection, ascension, and kingdom of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. There can be no doubt respecting the priority of the predictions to the birth of Christ, because it is well known by every person, who is at all conversant in these matters, that the Old Testament was translated out of Hebrew into the Greek language, and dispersed over the world, many years before Christ came; and that the latest of the predictions was upwards of three centuries before the birth of the Redeemer of mankind. Such a variety of circumstances, therefore, predicted concerning one man, so many years before he was born, of so extraordinary a nature, and under such convulsions and revolutions of civil governments, all accomplished in Christ, and in no other person that ever appeared in the world, point him out with irresistible evidence, as the Saviour of mankind. I call upon, and challenge the most hardened infidel in Christendom to refute the conclusion.

But to render the investigation more simple, and to bring the enquiry into a narrower compass, let any man, who is sceptically inclined, take the fifty-second and fifty-third chapters of Isaiah, and compare them seriously with the twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh chapters of St. Matthew's gospel, and then let him deny that Jesus Christ is the true Messiah, if he can. Rochester, and many others have made the experiment, and found that the power of God unto the conviction of their minds, and the salvation of their souls. That all these extremely minute circumstances of time, place, character and the like, should centre in Christ, and in no other person that ever appeared in human nature, is truly remarkable, and absolutely demonstrative of his Messiahship. Indeed, that he should be born at such a time, in such a place, and under circumstances of poverty; that he should suffer, and be opposed by those who were strangers to his character, and be finally put to an ignominious death: these things were all common to him, with many more of our fellow-creatures. But, that he should profess to be the Saviour of mankind—that he should be described as one who was to come—be born under the fourth monarchy—while the second temple was yet standing—before the dominion of the Jews was entirely taken away—in a time of profound and universal peace

when there was a general expectation of some extraordinary person:—that he should have existed with God before the foundations of the world were laid—been the companion of the Almighty—been sprung from the Deity by an ineffable generation—been the son of God—the son of man—begotten of a pure virgin by divine energy, and not by carnal copulation—that he should be the son of Abraham—Isaac—Jacob—Judah—Jesse—David—born in mean condition—yet having an illustrious herald preceding him—in the spirit of Elijah preaching, not in Jerusalem, but in the wilderness—and successful in his office:—that he should be born in Bethlehem—go down into Egypt—be a preacher of the gospel—exercise his ministry in Galilee—in the neighbourhood of Zebulon and Nephthali—yet be the proprietor of the temple in Jerusalem:—that he should be emphatically the servant of God, whose name is the Branch—a plant of renown—the messenger of the covenant—a prophet—a priest; not of the tribe of Levi, and after the order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchizedec—a king—a righteous king—the prince of peace, having a universal and everlasting kingdom:—that he should be the sun of righteousness—the East—the Just One—Emmanuel—the Shepherd—Jehovah our righteousness—the lion of the tribe of Judah:—that he should be anointed, not with oil to his offices, but with the Holy Ghost:—that he should be of a most meek, patient, and humble disposition—teaching mankind the doctrines of salvation without pomp and noise—endowed with a peculiar degree of wisdom and understanding—and speaking the most healing words to tender minds and afflicted consciences—changing thereby all the powers of the soul:—that he should confirm the reality of his mission and the divinity of his doctrine by a variety of benevolent miracles—and yet that the principal persons among his countrymen should not submit to his pretensions—be the chief corner stone of his church—and, notwithstanding, rejected by the builders—though embraced by many of the common people:—that he should be despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief—seen riding in humble triumph into the capitol of his kingdom—the people crying hosannah to the son of David:—that his zeal for the honour of God should transport him almost to excess:—that he should be betrayed by a friend—sold for thirty

pieces of silver:—that these pieces should be thrown down in the temple—and applied to the purchase of a potter's field:—that he should be condemned in judgment—forsaken by all his friends in his greatest need—finish his public office in three years and a half—be ignominiously scourged—smitten on the face—befouled with spittle—wounded in his hands—by his friends—marred and disfigured in his countenance—patient and silent under all his ill-treatment—suspended with wicked men—buried in the tomb of a rich man—put to death exactly at the end of 490 years from a particular period—presented with vinegar and gall—wounded in his hands and feet—laughed to scorn under his sufferings:—that his garment should be parted among his keepers:—that lots should be cast for his seamless vesture:—under all his distresses that not a bone of his body should be broken:—that his side should be pierced:—that he should make intercession for transgressors:—be cut off, though innocent:—that a fountain should be opened to wash away sin—atonement made for the iniquities of the world—in the last of Daniel's 70 weeks—the old covenant abolished—a new one introduced—the blood of Messiah being the seal of the covenant:—that though he should be buried, he should not see corruption—but be raised from the grave on the third day:—that he should bring from the dead some tokens of his victory—ascend into heaven—attended with angels, take his place at the right hand of God—and send down the Spirit upon his followers:—that the gospel should be first preached in Jerusalem—multitudes converted to the faith—great persecutions endured by those who embraced it—the Jews rejected—and the church called by a new name:—that the gospel should be generally opposed by the kings and governors of the world—yet after some time they should become favourable, and give it encouragement?—that the Gentile nations should be enlightened and called:—that every soul should submit to Messiah—those who reject him being confounded—and those who embrace him being protected—that he should finally be the judge of the world—destroy death—and crown his faithful people with everlasting joy:—that all these things should be predicted of some one person, several hundreds, or even some thousand years asunder from each other; and that they should all receive accom-

plishment in Jesus Christ, without any one exempt case, and in no other person that ever appeared upon earth: if under such circumstances Jesus Christ were not the person intended in the divine councils, and the Messiah whom all the prophets were inspired to predict, it would be one of the greatest of miracles. Prophecy would be of no use. All evidence would be rendered precarious, and mankind left to roam at large without any satisfactory guide to direct their steps in pursuit of truth and salvation. I think then we may say, with unshaken confidence, in the words of St. Philip to Nathaniel; We have found him, of whom Moses in the Law, and the Prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

But, if we turn from these prophecies to those which more immediately respect the condition of the Christian church in these latter days, we shall find they also are extremely remarkable, and absolutely conclusive for the divine authority of the Sacred Writings.

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, invaded the land of Israel about 600 years before the birth of Christ, and carried into captivity a considerable number of the inhabitants of the country. Among others, led captive, were Daniel and his three companions, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. In the second year of his reign, he had a remarkable dream, which made a strong impression upon his mind, but which he was not able to recollect. He sent for all the wise men of Babylon, and, however unreasonable the injunction, insisted, that they should make known his dream, together with the interpretation thereof, upon pain of death. After some time, the king's determination was revealed unto Daniel. He requested a little respite might be allowed him, before the decree should be put in execution. This being granted, he went to his three religious companions, and desired them to join with him in fasting and prayer, to entreat the Lord to discover unto him the king's dream, and the interpretation thereof. The Lord was intreated of Daniel and his three friends, and the whole matter from first to last, was revealed unto him, to the full satisfaction, and even astonishment of the king. The introduction to the dream is extremely beautiful. See Daniel ii. 1—30. The dream is this: Dan. ii. 31—35. The interpretation runs thus: Dan. ii. 37—45. The king

was so affected with the wonderful manifestation of his inmost thoughts, that he was quite overcome, forgot his own dignity, and fell into an act of idolatry. Dan. ii. 46—49*.

The dream is so distinct, the interpretation of it so satisfactory, and the whole so perfectly conformable to the history of the world, as far as the several ages have hitherto proceeded, that no thoughtful man can help being exceedingly struck with the accuracy of the divine foreknowledge.

The dream itself was the figure of an image in the form of a man, made principally of metal, but yet the metal was of different kinds. The head was of gold. This was an emblematical representation of Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian empire over which he presided. The breast and the arms of the image were of silver. This was an emblematical representation of the empire of Persia, which was to subvert and succeed the Babylonian. Nebuchadnezzar was, at that time, the most powerful monarch in all the earth, and made Babylon, the capital of his kingdom, the wonder of the world. Within sixty years, however, the empire was overturned, and Babylon itself taken by Cyrus the Great, afterwards king of Persia.—The belly and thighs of the image were of brass. This represented a third empire which was to succeed the Babylonian and Persian. Accordingly, about 200 hundred years after the establishment of the Persian empire, Alexander, king of Macedonia, a small state in the upper part of Greece, marched against Darius, king of Persia, defeated him in three pitched battles, and totally subverted the second of the four empires. The Grecian then became the third. The fourth was represented by legs of iron, and feet part of iron and part of clay. This is the Roman; for it was these people, who subdued the four successors of Alexander, and reduced their kingdoms into Roman provinces, and particularly Greece and Macedonia, which were subdued by them 130 years after the conquest of Persia by Alexander the Great, and 200 years before the birth of Christ. The Roman empire then was the fourth and the last. It was represented in this image by iron legs, and feet of iron and clay.

* Let the Reader take his Bible, turn to these several passages, and consider them well, before he proceeds to the observations which follow.

Thou sawest, says Daniel, to the king, till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet, that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image, became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

The four empires were all to be destroyed, and a fifth was to succeed, which was to be different from all that had gone before. The fourth too was to be unlike the three former in several respects. The image had iron legs. This implied, that the empire, represented by them, was to be more powerful than any of those which had gone before. But then the feet and toes of the image were part of iron and part of clay. This was to denote, that the latter ages of the Roman empire were partly strong and partly weak. The ten toes too, upon the feet of the image, were designed to represent ten kingdoms into which the Roman empire was to be divided, just as the two feet of a human creature are split into ten ramifications. This is expressed by the prophet in the manner following: Whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters's clay and part of iron; the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron; forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay; so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men, but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. The meaning of which seems to be, the rulers of the ten kingdoms, into which the Roman empire will be divided, shall form marriages, alliances, and contracts one with another from time to time, for supporting each other's interests; but none of their schemes and alliances for obtaining universal empire shall stand. They shall all be broken and come to nought. No universal empire shall ever exist upon earth again, till the spiritual empire of Jesus Christ, over the hearts, minds, souls, consciences and lives of men takes place. Jesus, maugre all opposition, shall be an universal monarch, and the only universal monarch, who shall ever exist again.

It is not however, expressly asserted in the prophecy before us, that the Roman empire should be split into ten kingdoms. It is only said the kingdom shall be divided. But though it is not asserted in so many words, it is strongly intimated by the ten toes of the two feet of the image. And the whole is more fully explained in Daniel's vision, recorded in the seventh chapter, where the beast, which is symbolical of the Roman empire, is represented with ten horns, as here the image with ten toes. And indeed, it is necessary to the full understanding of this dream of Nebuchadnezzar that we should compare it with the vision of Daniel, which signifies the same thing under different images, with some additional circumstances. This vision of Daniel was near fifty years after the dream of Nebuchadnezzar. The first part of the vision is in Dan. vii. 1—8.

After this the prophet had a representation of the everlasting Father of the universe, with his eternal Son, the blessed Jesus, passing sentence upon the little horn in these verses. A horn is a symbolical representation of government, power, dominion. The government signified by this little horn was to be utterly destroyed, and Jesus, is to erect his universal empire upon the ruins of it. See Dan. vii. 9—14. This is the same glorious and universal kingdom of Messiah, which is described in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Compare Dan. ii. 35—44.

When Daniel had beheld the judgment of the little horn, he did not understand the meaning of it. He was, therefore, greatly troubled, and very desirous of knowing what the whole signified. After a little time, he took courage, and went up to one of the glorious Beings, who stood by, to enquire. Whereupon the happy Spirit, that was in the train of Messiah, laid open to Daniel the outlines of the whole history of the corruptions of the Christian church—their rise—their progress—their amazing enormity—their subversion—and their total demolition: See Dan. vii. 15—28.

These are wonderful predictions*, in which we are all

* The reader will find these, and other predictions of Daniel, ably explained by the late Bishop Newton in his Dissertations on the Prophecies. Few of our most able writers on the prophecies, however, seem to me to have any idea, that they apply to the Protestant establishments, as well as to the Catholic kingdoms. All these things are against us, and we are usually extremely backward to believe what we do not wish to be true.

most nearly concerned; because the awful times of which they speak, we have reason to believe, are just at hand; and none of us know how soon we may be involved in the distresses which are here foretold. The Roman empire, we have seen, was to be broken up and divided into ten kingdoms. Sometime, soon after the formation of these ten kingdoms, which are denominated horns, there was to arise one little horn, one small dominion, underneath, or from behind, three of the ten horns, or kingdoms, into which the empire should be divided. This little horn was to conquer and subdue three of the ten horns, and to usurp their dominion. After this, it was to go on and increase more and more till it had obtained a peculiar kind of power and jurisdiction over all the seven other horns. This one little horn, which was become so great and powerful, was also to grow proud, and vain, and cruel, and bloody, and tyrannical and idolatrous, and a vile persecutor of the true servants of the living God. This horribly bloody and tyrannical power, was to be aided and assisted in its cruelties towards the genuine followers of the Lamb, by all the other seven kingdoms, over which it had obtained an unbounded influence. This wicked and cruel dominion was to continue a time and times and half a time. A time here, in prophetic language, signifies a Jewish year, which consisted of only 360 days. The times then will signify twice 360 days; and half a time will signify half of 360 days, or 180 days. But a day, in the language of prophecy, is put for a year. If, therefore, we add these numbers together, they will be thrice 360 years, and 180 years, or exactly 1260 years, for the continuance of this bloody and tyrannical power; at the end of which period it is to be completely and everlastingly destroyed.

Now, let us look back and see whether all these strange predictions of Daniel have ever been accomplished.

The Roman empire was to be destroyed. It was so, in the fifth and sixth centuries. It was to be divided into a number of small kingdoms: It was so in the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries. A little horn was to arise, unperceived, and subdue three of the ten horns. The Bishop of Rome, in a sort of secret and imperceptible manner, did arise to temporal dominion and subdued, by the help of Pepin, king of France, three of those ten states, into which the empire had been divided; the senate of Rome, the kingdom of Lombardy, and the exarchate of Ravenna; three governments all in Italy. And,

it is extremely remarkable, that upon becoming master of these estates, the Bishop of Rome assumed a triple crown, which he hath worn ever since, and which he continues to wear at this very day! This is wonderful!

Now the Bishop of Rome was to retain his power over these three states and his influence over the seven other kingdoms 1260 years. If we knew exactly when to begin to reckon these years, we should know precisely when the destruction of Antichrist would take place*. Some begin to reckon from the year 606, when the proud Prelate of Rome was declared Universal Bishop. Others begin from the year 666, the apocalyptic number; and others from the year 756, when he became a temporal prince. If the first period be right, then the Pope of Rome, the undoubted Antichrist of the New Testament, will be completely destroyed, as a horn, about the year 1866. If the second period be intended by the Spirit of Prophecy, then his end will be near the year 1926. But if the third period be the time, then Antichrist will retain some part of his dominion over the nations till about the year 2016†.

Most evident it is, that he is rapidly falling. There is a great deal, however, yet to be done. But, when God works, who shall let? Much has been already done, and all will be accomplished in due time. Not one word shall fall to the ground of all that the Lord hath spoken.

Nay, not only shall Antichrist be overthrown, but even Rome itself, the place and city where he hath carried on his abominations for so many ages, shall be everlastingly destroyed. The language of scripture is extremely strong, and seems sufficiently clear and precise‡.

* The temporal power of the Pope is already gone: what further remains to be done, a little more time, a few more fleeting years, perhaps months, will shew. How eventful is the present period!

† The number of Bishops, whom we usually call Popes, who have presided over the Romish church from its first institution by the Apostles, is about two hundred and fifty or sixty; they have, therefore, presided only about seven years apiece upon an average.

‡ It is granted, that all the passages upon this subject are figurative and prophetic, and therefore must be interpreted with caution; but yet they seem so strong and precise, that we cannot well understand them in any more moderate sense. The reader will compare them together, and form his own judgment.

Thus Daniel:—I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed and given to the burning flame. Thus too St. Paul, where he is probably speaking of Antichrist:—The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.—And again in another place in the same Epistle, where he is certainly and professedly speaking of Antichrist, he saith;—And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.—Thus too St. John. —The Beast goeth into perdition. — Again:—Her plagues shall be in one day, and she shall be utterly burnt with fire.—The kings of the earth shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, standing afar off for fear of her torment, saying, Alas! Alas! that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. In one hour so great riches are come to nought!—They shall see the smoke of her burning!—And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence, shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee. And no craftsman, of whatever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; and the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee.—Immediately after these words, all the inhabitants of heaven are represented as rejoicing, and saying, Hallelujah! And her smoke rose up forever and ever.

It will be allowed, that these are very strong expressions, and imply a punishment extremely severe. It is remarkable too, that all the country about the city of Rome, is a kind of bitumen, or pitchy substance. And in the year of our Lord 80, a fire burst out from beneath the ground, in the middle of the city, and burnt four of the principal Heathen temples,

with the sacred buildings of the Capitol. Italy, indeed, is a storehouse of fire. And when the 1260 years are expired, Rome itself, with all its magnificence, will be absorbed in a lake of fire, sink into the sea, and rise no more at all for ever.*

It was this grand Antichristian apostacy,† of which we have been speaking that St. Paul unquestionably alludes to in 2 Thess. ii. 1—12; in 1 Tim. iv 1—3; and in 2 Tim. iii. 1—5. St. John speaks of the same thing, 1 John ii. 18, 22; and in the book of Revelation he hath described the abominations of the Church of Rome at considerable length, but in language highly figurative.‡ If we will be at the pains to lay all these predictions together, and compare them with those of Daniel, before mentioned, we cannot fail seeing to whom all the characters belong, and how awful the destruction is, which awaits this mother of abominations.

“But what is all this to us? Have we not long ago renounced the errors and delusions of the Church of Rome, and declared ourselves professors of the genuine doctrines of the Redeemer of mankind? May we not expect, therefore,

* Being persuaded of the destruction of this metropolis of the Christian world, one cannot help feeling pleasure that the French have removed many of the finest pieces of art from this vast repository of curiosities. [*]

[*] The great regret is, that the French should have obtained these valuable acquisitions, in a manner which proves that they are totally unworthy of them, and are so little capable of properly estimating their value. What a source of wealth and splendour might not such monuments have procured to an honourable people. Distinguished foreigners of all nations attracted by them, would have poured into the French metropolis to be gratified with the sight. But the despot now ruling France, has given to them such a warning in his equally unjust and impolitic detention of the English, that all foreigners will regard his Metropolis in the light of a Bastile, and his dominions as the land of cruelty, of blood, and of death.—*Editor.*

† Alexander Pope, Esq. though a Catholic, as is supposed, to the day of his death, was convinced that the Church of Rome had all the marks of that Antichristian power predicted in the writings of the New Testament. And though he had not courage to profess himself a Protestant, he was firmly persuaded of the truths of Christianity. Ruffhead, p. 542.

‡ The seven seals in this hieroglyphical book refer to Rome in her Pagan state: the seven trumpets to the Roman empire in its Christian state; and the seven vials to the same Roman empire, broken into seven kingdoms, in its Popish and Antichristian state.

to be delivered from those judgments, which have already fallen upon France and other countries, and which shall assuredly fall on all the Antichristian states in Europe, which formerly made a part of the Roman empire?"

The ten* kingdoms, before spoken of, we know, are all to fall, at the end of the said 1260 years, from the time they owned the dominion of the little horn. Now, England is universally allowed to be one of the ten. If we begin to reckon the 1260 years from the time when Gregory the Great, Pope of Rome, sent over Austin, and his companions, to preach the gospel to our idolatrous ancestors, there are a few years yet to expire before our doom shall be sealed in the courts above.† The French can have no power against us till the commission is signed by the Governor of the world. The times and the seasons he hath reserved in his own hand. Nations do not rise and fall by chance.

"But, is there no possibility of preventing, or avoiding, the universal subversion awaiting both of us, and all the other kingdoms of Europe, which constituted parts of the ancient empire?"

There seems to be one way,‡ and but one, in the nature of things. And what may that be? I am sorry to say it is

* These ten kingdoms began to take their rise about the year of our Lord 450, and proceeded more and more towards permanency for many years. The revolutions and convulsions of those ages were horribly cruel, bloody, and distressing.

† There is some reason, from the present appearance of things, to suppose, that the 1260 prophetic years must be calculated from a period somewhat earlier than the commencement of the seventh century. The year of our Lord 538 accords with the downfall of the Pope's temporal dominion, A. D. 1798.

‡ I am led to think there is still a possibility of averting our unhappy doom, from the case of Nineveh in Jonah: and that of Jerusalem in Jeremiah, particularly ch. xxvi. 1—8. It were happy for us, if the possibility amounted to a probability. Compare Jer. xviii. 1—10. Our safety by no means depends upon our more frequent repetition of pharisaical forms, and superstitious ceremonies, but upon correcting what is amiss in our morals, and un-evangelical in our doctrines and ecclesiastical constitution. Was not the present Pope of Rome dethroned at the very moment he was surrounded by his cardinals, and celebrating his own exaltation to the Papal chair? Was there ever a more worthy and religious Pope, than his present Holiness? Were the ancient Jews ever more strictly and superstitiously religious, than when they crucified the Lord of Glory? or, than when their temple and nation were destroyed?

one, which is by no means likely to take place.—It is a thorough reformation both in theory and practice, in Church and State: a general reformation in the moral and religious conduct of the inhabitants of this country. For these purposes, must not religion be reduced to gospel purity and simplicity? * must not the Church be totally unconnected with, and separate from the

* Consult Dr. Hartley, in his *Observations on Man*, for a more particular account of the fall of the Establishments in Christendom. Our ecclesiastical governors would do well to weigh seriously what that learned Physician hath said upon this subject, while yet there is time. See Part 2. Prop. 82.—But what can we expect from men, who are surrounded with worldly honours, entitled to a vast patronage of livings, and tempted with near 100,000 pounds a year, to let things continue as they are? He must be almost more than man whose virtue rises above such seducements. Tillotson, Burnet, and others, will complain all is not right; will profess they wish things to be altered; but how seldom do we find a Bishop or dignified Clergyman, who believes the Scriptures so firmly, as to renounce all the riches and honours of this world, and to walk according to the unadulterated gospel of the Saviour of mankind? When a man is made a D. D. does not the spirit of a D. D. usually come upon him? and when a B——p, the spirit of a B——p? Though he had been ever so eager for the removal of abuses before, does he not usually endeavour to lull conscience to rest, and even become an advocate for the continuance of things in their present state? To be sure, he has much to lose, and little to gain, by any change that can take place: and “a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.” When a man has subscribed an indefinite number of times to a set of propositions, some of which he doubts, and others of which he disbelieves, it is a thousand to one, but he goes on to the end of the chapter, and sinks at last into eternal perdition, as a base prevaricator with God and conscience. If in such a case, we can be in a state of safety for eternity, I am clearly of opinion, religion is all a farce, and it is of little consequence, with respect to the future world, whether we be Christians or Heathens, Jews or Mahometans.—God requireth truth in the inward parts!

It should seem, that the civil part of the British constitution is also capable of considerable improvement. Every thing of both kinds, however, might easily be accomplished by the enlightened endeavours of our present legislature. Do not the criminal laws of the country likewise stand in need of revisal? Let any man judge of the truth of this, when it is considered that we have upwards of 160 offences, punishable with death.

The jurisprudence also of the country seems to want reform in a variety of respects. The court of chancery in particular, is enormously tedious and expensive. [*] Do not other departments of the law too need much reform? In the county of Middlesex alone, in the year 1793, the number of bailable writs and executions for debts, from ten to twenty pounds, amounted to no less than 5,712.

Civil Constitution? This is the opinion of some respectable men. Must not our Bishops and Clergy be reduced to the scriptural standard? Jesus Christ left sole king in his own church? and human ordinances, in things sacred give way to divine prescriptions? Without these great moral and religious changes, can we expect to be preserved from the general wreck of Europe? And whether these changes are likely to take place among us, let any cool and impartial observer judge. Should not our learned Bishops and Clergy see these things, and zealously attempt a reformation in themselves, in the ecclesiastical part of the constitution of the country, and among the great body of the people? Should they not universally cry aloud and not spare; and sound the trumpet in God's holy mountain? Should we not all set ourselves in good earnest to stem the torrent of iniquity, which overflows these happy lands, and threatens to involve us in one general calamity? The time is come. God hath sent forth the sword among the nations, and it is Reformation of Ruination.* Without this it may be declared by

and the aggregate amount of the debts sued for, to 81,791 pounds.—The costs, of these actions, although made up and not defended at all, would amount to £68,728.—And, if defended, the aggregate expence to recover 81,791 pounds, must be no less than 285,820 pounds! being considerably more than three times the amount of the debts sued for or defended.—At present, the rule is, to allow the same costs for forty shillings as for 10,000 pounds.—Why are these abuses permitted to continue? Is not the case but too clear! In short; the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint: from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness among us. The B——s play into the hands of the C——y; the L——s into the hands of the A——s; the P——s into the hands of the A——s, &c. &c. &c. thus the world goes round. There is more truth in Mr. Pope's observation than at first appears; that "an honest man's the noblest work of God." Vide Treatise on the Police of London.

[*] The Editor is credibly informed that there are causes in this court which have been in prosecution above a century.

* It is not enough that such men as P——s, B——n, W——n, H——y, P——y, and others, should contend in favour of the Gospel of Christ while they themselves, are by their conduct the grand supporters of our ecclesiastical hierarchy, with all its corruptions. If they wish effectually to serve their country, and the cause of humanity, they should apply their rare abilities, to reduce the national religion to the pure standard of the Gospel. But what can we expect, when men's eyes are blinded, and their hearts

the authority of the Word of the Lord, that as soon as ever the predicted 1260 years are accomplished, we shall be swept

bribed by worldly honours and preferments? Abundance of persons in the Church of Rome have seen, and do now see the abuses and corruptions of that Church—father Paul, for instance, in the last age, Dr. Geddes and Mr. Berrington in the present—but they cannot prevail upon themselves to quit their stations: Rev. xiv. 9—11, should be consulted; so some persons with us have long seen the abuses and unevangelical traits of our own Church, and yet they make themselves easy, by writing in defence of the immortal cause of Christianity, while the vessel, in which they themselves are embarked, is in danger of being dashed against the rocks. If one man has a right to prevaricate, and subscribe what he does not believe, why has not another? Though of a sentiment in religion very different, I must say that Lindsey, Jebb, Hammond, Disney, and others, who have sacrificed their preferment to the peace of their own minds, are honourable men, deserving of all praise. But can we say the same of those Clergymen, who go on subscribing and swearing to various particular propositions, which they well know or believe to be wrong?

There is some reason to suppose Mr. Chillingworth's conduct has had a considerable effect in reconciling the Clergy to subscribe to doctrines, which they avowedly do not believe. For this great man declared, in a letter to Dr. Sheldon, that, "if he subscribed, he subscribed his own damnation," and yet, in no long space of time, he actually did subscribe to the Articles of the church again and again! Lord! what is man?

Vide Biog. Brit. by Kippis, vol. iii. p. 516.

The salvo by which he and some other Clergymen, highly respectable, get over their scruples, is, to subscribe the 39 Articles as articles and terms of peace. This, however, appears to me a shameful evasion, and inconsistent with common honesty. At this rate, a man in Italy may subscribe Pope Pius's Creed; in Turkey the Koran of Mahomet; or in a Jewish government, the Talmud of the Rabbins. [*]

Since the above was written, I have been struck with a similar sentiment in the first part of Mr. Paine's Age of Reason; and here at least I have the pleasure of agreeing with that celebrated Deist, though we differ *toto cælo* upon almost every thing where the Sacred Writings are concerned:—"It is impossible," says he, very justly, "to calculate the moral mischief, if I may so express it, that mental lying has produced in society. When a man has so far corrupted and prostituted the chastity of his mind, as to subscribe his professional belief of things he does not believe, he has prepared himself for the commission of every other crime. He takes up the trade of a Priest for the sake of gain, and in order to qualify himself for that trade he begins with a perjury. Can we conceive any thing more destructive to morality than this?"

This subject is considered in a very serious point of view by Bishop Burnet in his Pastoral Care, 3d edit. p. 96—99, only he

with the bosom of destruction. For thus saith the infallible Oracle.—Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors, and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them. The four empires and ten kingdoms, as they are now constituted, shall,

applies it to our declaring we are moved by the Holy Ghost to preach the Gospel.

A certain respectable Clergyman of our church, whose writings on some subjects have few equals, hath said—"If any one asks what the expressions in Scripture, regenerate—born of the Spirit—new creatures, mean?—We answer, that they mean nothing! nothing to us!—nothing to be found, or sought for, in the present circumstances of Christianity."—This gentleman well knows, that these declarations of his are extremely different from the doctrines of the Church of England, and yet, since he published these sentiments, he has subscribed more than once, and, as far as appears, would subscribe again and again, if two or three more good preferments should fall in his way.

My indignation compels me to say, that a body of Clergy of that description—however learned, ingenious and worthy they may be in other respects—deserve extirpating from the face of the earth; and, if there be a judgment to come, our doom will be uncommonly severe. The Scripture declares, all liars shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. And what more solemn lie can there be, than subscribing our names, that we believe a number of propositions, which in our consciences we judge to be false? unless it be that declaration, we "trust we are moved by the Holy Ghost to preach the Gospel," when we do not believe there is any Holy Ghost, but laugh at every pretension of the sort as Methodism and enthusiasm? If the Lord is a God of knowledge by whom actions are weighed, we prevaricating Parsons shall have a sad account to give another day. We may keep up our heads a few years now, while in possession of two or three good livings, and the world smiles upon us, but the day of darkness is at no great distance, when nothing but integrity and conscious uprightness will stand us in any stead. If once the Clergy become generally prevaricators with their solemn subscriptions, the fate of the English church is determined.

[*] Certain it is, that if a man may lie and prevaricate in order to insure his own peace, or even the peace of the nation, he may with equal propriety commit any other crime with the same view, be it theft, adultery, murder, or what not. But let men take heed that by these prevarications they lose not that peace which is of all others the most valuable, the most easily lost, and the most hardly acquired: namely, peace of conscience, or the testimony of their conscience that they please God. And what a dreadful reflection does this sentiment convey on Government by some who would probably be thought its best friends, that it allows of peace only on terms with which no conscientious man can comply.—*Editor.*

along with the Whore of Babylon, be swept from the face of the earth, and be known no more at all, in their present forms. And what shall be the issue? Afflictive as the change may be, the end shall prove glorious. In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom, shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. All people, nations; and languages, shall serve the Redeemer of mankind in the true spirit and power of his religion. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.—Then shall the wolf dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.—And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice-den. The followers of Jesus shall never hurt or destroy one another again, but shall beat their swords into plough shares; and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.*

“But still, it is not easy to discern, why a Protestant nation should share the common fate of the Catholic countries, even upon the principles of the prophetic Scriptures?”

Possibly:—But have you reflected upon the fate of Holland Geneva, and the reformed Cantons of Switzerland? They were wholly Protestant, and made their boast of being more pure than most other churches of the reformed religion: and yet they have undergone the same changes as the Catholic states, though with infinitely less blood and slaughter. And I

* The reader may consult and compare other prophecies of a similar kind with the above; particularly Isaiah ii. 1—5, and Micah iv. 1—5.

strongly suspect, that though the Pope* and Church of Rome may be, and certainly are at the head of the grand 1260 years delusion, yet all other churches, of whatever denomination, whether established or tolerated, or persecuted, which partake of the same spirit, or have instituted doctrines and ceremonies inimical to the pure and unadulterated Gospel of Christ, shall sooner or later share in the fate of that immense fabric of human ordinances.

That we have various things in our ecclesiastical establishment, which cannot be defended, upon the pure principles of the Son of God, seems to many unquestionable. Our excel-

* The Pope of Rome may be, and probably is, a worthy and respectable private character. There have been many such in a course of ages. But, because he is at the head of the great apostacy from the genuine Gospel of Christ, he shall go into perdition, let his own moral conduct be what it may. So the late king of France was a worthy man, and had many and considerable virtues; yet, because he was at the head of one of the ten antichristian kingdoms which gave its power to the support of the Beast; and, because the 1260 prophetic years in that kingdom were expired, he went into perdition, in a manner the most afflictive that can be conceived. [*] King George too, is a most worthy character, and his successors, we trust, will be the same, but unless there shall be piety and wisdom enough in the government of the country, civil and religious, to reform radically the Constitution, and render it consistent with the true spirit of Divine Revelation, there is reason to tremble for the consequence. Private worth, it is evident from a thousand examples, will never protect public and general depravity, from the punishment due, and the destruction denounced. All that can be said for it, is, that the fate of a nation may, for a season, be suspended, till the Noahs, the Daniels, the Jobs, and the Josiahs, are taken out of the way.

Consult the pamphlet entitled *Reform or Ruin*, for some useful hints. That pamphlet, however, though containing valuable matter, as far as it goes, leaves the constitutional defects of the country untouched, and seems to take for granted all is there pretty near as it should be.

[*] 'Tis somewhat singular that the learned author should nowhere have noticed the celebrated work of Mr. Fleming. That this gentleman should in so remarkable and express a manner have foretold the year of the French Revolution, and the extreme degradation of the French Monarchy, is surely a circumstance deserving of great attention. His whole work is interesting, but it is much to be hoped that his conjecture respecting the general prevalence of Popery is not equally well founded. The modesty and piety of the performance carry with them a great recommendation.—*Editor*

lent reformers* did great things, considering how they had been educated, and the age in which they lived. They were good men, and proceeded, in their regenerating work, much farther than might have been expected; but their successors have not followed the noble example set before them, of reducing the religious establishment of the country to primitive purity, and evangelical simplicity.† We have been contented

* It has been the opinion of many disinterested persons, that several of our church appendages are not only unnecessary, but pernicious. Archbishop Cranmer in particular speaks in strong terms against some, which he was obliged from the necessity of circumstances to retain. In a letter to Lord Cromwell he says: "Having had experience, both in times past, and also in our days, how the sect of Prebendaries have not only spent their time in much idleness, and their substance in superfluous belly-cheer, I think it not to be a convenient state or degree to be maintained and established. Considering, first, that commonly a Prebendary is neither a learner, nor a teacher, but a good viander. Then by the same name, they look to be chief, and to bear all the whole rule and pre-eminence in the college where they be resident; by means whereof, the younger of their own nature, given more to pleasure, good cheer, and pastime, than to abstinence, study, and learning, shall easily be brought from their books to follow the appetite and example of the same Prebendaries, being their heads and rulers. And the state of the Prebendaries hath been so excessively abused, that when learned men have been admitted into such room, many times they have desisted from their good and godly studies, and all other virtuous exercises of preaching and teaching." *Monthly Mag.* for May, 1798.

† "There are many prophecies, which declare the fall of the ecclesiastical powers of the Christian world. And though each church seems to flatter itself with hopes of being exempted; yet it is very plain, that the prophetic characters belong to all. They have all left the true, pure, simple religion; and teach for doctrines the commandments of men. They are all merchants of the earth, and have set up a kingdom of this world, abounding in riches, temporal power, and external pomp. They have all a dogmatizing spirit, and persecute such as do not receive their own mark, and worship the image which they have set up.—It is very true, that the Church of Rome is Babylon the Great, and the Mother of harlots, and of the abominations of the earth: But all the rest have copied her example." *Hartley's Observations on Man.* p. 2. § 82.

Be it observed, that Hartley was no Dissenter, but a most serious, learned, and candid churchman; and wrote near 50 years ago.

If my memory does not fail me, Dr. Downham, sometime since Bishop of Derry in Ireland, reckoned up 600 gross errors in the system of Popery.

to suffer our religious Constitution, our doctrines, and ceremonies, and forms of public worship to remain, nearly in the same unpurged, adulterated, and superstitious state, in which the original reformers left them.* At least, the alterations which have been made since Edward VI's. time have been few and inconsiderable. And the very last improvements, which took place in our ecclesiastical frame of things, were in the reign of that haughty, persecuting, wavering, and yet tyrannical bigot James I. who would bear no contradiction, but establish every thing just according to his own pleasure.†

If any person will seriously consider the low and superstitious state of the minds of men in general, in the time of James I. much more in the reigns of his predecessors, he will not be surprised to find, that there are various matters in our ecclesiastical constitution, which require some alteration. Our forefathers did great things, and we cannot be sufficiently thankful for their labours; but much more remains to be done, and it will be found a task of no ordinary difficulty, peaceably and quietly to reduce things to a pure evangelical state. This never can be done, indeed, but by a strong concurrence of providential circumstances. The approbation of his Majesty, with the majority in the two Houses of Parliament, might easily effect every thing that is desirable. This would render a reformation practicable, without danger to the Throne. But it should seem, that, with danger, or without danger, the prophecies of Daniel being true, such a change must take place sooner or later. This power of reforming whatever is amiss, is one of the peculiar excellencies of the British constitution.—Consult Simpson's Key to the Prophecies, in a note on the last sheet, for some thoughts on this subject.

* Cranmer, Bucer, Jewel, and others, never considered the reformation, which took place in their own time, as complete. They did what they could, and what the humours of men would then bear, and left to their successors to accomplish what was still lacking. Vide Neal's History of the Puritans, vol. i. ch. 1. and 2. where evidence for these assertions is produced at some length. And now that I have mentioned this Work, I beg leave to recommend it in the warmest terms, as containing abundance of the most important and authentic information concerning the history of the English churches, from the time of the Reformation, in the reign of Henry VIII. to the Revolution under William III. in the year 1688. The last edition, enlarged by Dr. Toulmin, is by far the best. No Clergyman of the establishment should be without these valuable volumes. It is the interest of truth alone which we should wish to advance.

† Vide the Conference at Hampton-Court for the over-bearing conduct of this pedantic king, and the fulsome flattery of court-bishops. Several persons, moreover, were put to death, in this reign, for their religious opinions. Is not this one of the infallible marks of the Beast?

Indeed, to many well-informed persons, it seems extremely questionable, whether the religion of Jesus Christ admits of any civil establishment at all. They rather suppose, it is inconsistent with the very nature of it, and that it was never designed to be incorporated with any secular institution whatever.* Certain it is, that it made its way at first, not only without human aid, but even in opposition to all laws, both civil and religious, which then prevailed in the Roman empire.—This was the state of it for upwards of 300 years. It seems too, to be the intention of Divine Providence to reduce it again to the same simple and unconnected state. America hath set the example. France, Italy, Holland, and Switzerland are going the same way. And it is highly probable that all the other states in Europe will in due time, follow the same steps. As things now are in this country, the religion of Jesus Christ,

The next serious effort for reformation in our church, was soon after the Restoration. Charles II. behaved handsomely at first upon the occasion; but, acting under the controul of a number of bigoted and high-priestly Bishops, whose minds were still sore with resentment, he afterwards forfeited all his merit, as the guardian of religious liberty, and became a vile and cruel persecutor. Is not this too an indubitable mark of the Beast?

After this again, a very serious attempt was made to remove the things objected to in our church, soon after the Revolution, under the auspices of those excellent men, Tillotson, Patrick, Tennyson, Kidder, Stillingsfleet, Burnet, and others; but being opposed by a larger number of old-wisely Bishops, all their efforts came to nothing. They had been accustomed to read numpsimus all their lives, and numpsimus it should be, they were determined; and the two Houses of Parliament were disposed to acquiesce in their papistical and superstitious views. We shall rarely have again, at one time, such a constellation of learned, pious, and liberal-minded Bishops as then adorned the English Church.

* It is a remarkable fact, lately brought to light, that the immense empire of China, which is said to contain 333 millions of inhabitants, has no established religion. And, in the opinion of many, the Gospel of Jesus Christ will never have its full and proper effect upon mankind, till it is completely disentangled from every human institution. Leave it to itself; let it have fair-play; clog it not with civil pains and penalties; let it stand or fall by its own intrinsic worth; let neither kings or bishops lay their officious hands upon it; and then see how it will make its way among men. The greatest possible motive, by which man can be animated, is, the salvation of his own soul. If this will not move us, nothing else will be of any avail. These are the sentiments of some very sensible and well-informed persons. Whether they are right in this respect, I leave others to judge. To me there seems some weight in them.

which was not only not to be of this world,* but in direct opposition to it,† is certainly in a great degree, a temporal, worldly, civil institution. At least, it is a strange mixture of things, secular and religious.‡ It is nearly as much so, as it is in the Catholic countries.

* See John xviii. 36, 37, where Christ claims a kingdom.

† Compare Matt. v. 3—12, where he asserts the nature of that kingdom, and the qualifications of his subjects.

‡ One of our English Poets, who was even a bigot of the church, hath expressed himself on this subject in the manner following:

“Inventions added in a fatal hour,
Human appendages of pomp and power,
Whatever shines in outward grandeur great,
I give it up—a creature of the State.
Wide of the Church, as hell from heav’n is wide,
The blaze of riches, and the glare of pride,
The vain desire to be entitled Lord,
The worldly kingdom, and the princely sword
But should the bold usurping spirit dare
Still higher climb, and sit in Moses’ chair,
Pow’r o’er my faith and conscience to maintain,
Shall I submit, and suffer it to reign?
Call it the Church, and darkness put for light,
Falsehood with truth confound, and wrong with right:
No: I dispute the evils haughty claim,
The spirit of the world be still its name,
Whatever call’d by man ’tis purely evil,
’Tis Babel, Antichrist, and Pope, and Devil.”

It is a curious circumstance in the history of Religion in the present day, that while light and knowledge, and liberality of sentiment are rapidly diffusing themselves among mankind, a respectable clergyman should be found among us, who cuts off from salvation most of the foreign Protestant churches, and the whole body of Dissenters of every description in this country, but by the uncovenanted mercies of God. This is a most serious and important consideration. Yet this hath been done by Mr. Daubeny, in his *Guide to the Church*; and seemingly too with the full approbation of the Editor of the *British Critic*.[*] It certainly is incumbent upon Dissenters of all denominations to consider well what this learned gentleman has advanced, and either to refute the force of his arguments, or conform to the established religion of the country. Sir Richard Hill, in his *Apology for Brotherly Love*, has given such an answer to Mr. Daubeny’s *Guide* as that gentleman will not be easily able to refute. If the doctrine of the *Guide* be right, I do not see how we can be fairly justified in leaving the church of Rome. The capital mistake of the whole seems to be, a substitution of the church of England.

As to the King or Queen of any country, as the case is, being Head of the Church, and having the appointment of Bishops, and the nomination to church-livings, it is conceived by many to be utterly inconsistent with the very essence of the evangelical dispensation, and the unalienable rights of mankind. They will tell us, that neither his Majesty—whom God preserve!—nor the Lord Chancellor, nor his Majesty's Ministers, have, or can have, any concern in the government of the Church, or the appointment of officers in it, or to it, directly or indirectly, according to the spirit of the Gospel, but only in their private capacities as individual members of the church. No man upon earth, as it seems to them, is entitled to any such power. They scruple not to say, it is one of the very worst traits of Popery, and an infallible criterion of an anti-christian assuming. Mat. xx. 20—28, and xxiii. 1—12, are usually referred to upon this occasion.

As the law now stands in this country, the king is absolute head of the church, and the fountain of all ecclesiastical power; but, so far as the patronage of benefices goes, this is more nominal than real; for, in truth, there are as many heads as there are patrons of livings. A drunken swearing, libertine Lord Chancellor, who is living in open fornication or adultery, contrary to every law human and divine, if such chance to be his character, as sometimes is the case, has the appointment to a large number of livings. A corrupt, vile, unbelieving, immoral, wicked, Minister of State, if such happens to be his character, has the nomination to abundance of others. A Roman Catholic, or some of the most immoral of the nobility or gentry of the land, very frequently have the patronage of others. In not a few instances ladies have the presentation to church preferments. These are all virtually and substantially so many heads of the church; while the king or queen is only nominally and partially so. This is surely a lamentable state of things. Can any man wonder at the spread of infidelity and irreligion? Can we justly expect other than the downfall of such a system of corrupt, worldly policy? It is well known how harsh and

for the Church of Christ, exactly in the same manner as the Catholics substitute the Church of Rome for the Church of Christ.

[*] The Editor begs leave to refer to the masterly review of this author's writings in the Christian Observer.

disagreeable these melancholy truths will sound in the ears of interested men, and men who swallow every thing as gospel, to which they have been long accustomed: but I affirm it with all possible seriousness, again and again, that, as I understand the Scriptures, a radical reform, and the removal of all these secular circumstances alone, can save us, for any length of time, from national distress. I refer our Bishops—and beg they will seriously consider the awful declaration—to Dan. ii. 35, 44, before mentioned. Is not the time for its accomplishment fast approaching, and near at hand?

I have spoken above of the patronage of church-livings.—Some of my readers may be in a great degree strangers to the state of it. I have taken some pains to inform myself upon the subject, and I find that it stands nearly in the following proportions. I speak generally, but yet accurately enough for the purposes of common information. It is well known then, that the church-livings of England and Wales make together, speaking in round numbers, about ten thousand. Of these, near a thousand are in the gift of the king. It is customary, however, for the Lord Chancellor to present to all the livings, under the value of twenty pounds, in the king's book, and for the Ministers of State to present all the rest. Those under twenty pounds are about 780, and those above, near 180. Upwards of 1600 pieces of church preferment, of different sizes and descriptions, are in the gift of the 26 Bishops: more than 600 in the presentation of the two Universities: about 1000 in the gift of the several Cathedrals, and other clerical institutions: about 5,700 livings are in the nomination of the nobility and gentry of the land, men, women, and children: 50 or 60 there may be of a description different from any of the above, and nearer to the propriety of things. These are all so many heads of the church, in a very strong sense of the words, the king or queen of the country being a kind of Arch-head.* Moreover, the Bishops of the establishment are, con-

* Bishop Jewel, in a letter dated May 22, 1559, writes, "that the Queen (Elizabeth) refused to be called head of the church; and adds, that title could not be justly given to any mortal, it being due only to Christ; and that such titles had been so much abused by Antichrist, that they ought not to be any longer continued."

Bishop Burnet's Travels, Let. 1. p. 52.

Cardinal Wolsey, under Henry VIII. was head of the English church, and one of the greatest tyrants over the consciences of men

trary to all ancient usage, chosen by the civil power, the clergy and people over whom they are to preside, not having the least negative upon their election. When they are chosen too, they take their seats in the upper house of parliament, and act in most respects, like unto the temporal lords. I will not say, that this may not be good human policy, supposing the kingdom of Christ to be a mere worldly sovereignty; but it appears to me utterly inconsistent with the spirituality of our Saviour's empire, and has had for many ages a most unhappy effect upon the interests of his religion in the world.* Their emoluments are of such a nature, their worldly engagements so numerous, and the temptations to the pleasures, honours, and amusements of life so strong, that their minds become secularized, and they lose all lively relish for the peculiar duties of ministers of the Gospel; which they, therefore, very generally commit to the inferior orders of the clergy. They are nearly as much officers of the crown as the Judges and Magistrates of the land. They are chosen by the civil power, they are virtually paid by the civil power alone, the clergy and people not possessing the least controul. And then, as to the titles, by which they are designated, they appear to carry the most indisputable marks of the anti-christian apostacy.—His Grace, the most reverend father in God, William, by Divine Providence, lord archbishop of Canterbury!—The right reverend father in God, John, by Divine Permission, lord bishop of London!—What is there in the titles of the Pope of Rome,† that is more magnificent than the sound of these words? How unlike is all this to the spirit of the Gospel, and

that ever existed. Blessed be God for the Reformation! and the present liberty we enjoy!

* If the Gospel of Christ gave encouragement to such a state of things as this, much as I now admire it, I would reject all its pretensions, as a divine scheme, with indignation. I do not wonder that the world abounds with infidels and infidelity! What pity, however, men will not distinguish between the use of the Gospel, and the abuse of it? between the Gospel itself, and the additions which have been made to it by interested men?

† Mr. Paine, speaking of the Reformation, says sensibly enough, "A multiplicity of national Popes grew out of the downfall of the Pope of Christendom."—And I add, Rome itself scarce ever had a

the character and conduct of the lowly Saviour of mankind. Matt. xi. 28—33; xxiii. 1—12. How much calculated are such high sounding titles to swell the pride of frail mortals? Popes, and Bishops, and Parsons are made of like stuff with other men?

And then, what shall we say to the secular, and lukewarm condition of the generality of the Clergy of the land?—to the patronage of benefices before mentioned?—to the common and abominable sale of livings?—to our simoniacal contracts?—our sinecures, pluralities, non-residences?—to our declaring we

more bloody, libidinous, and detestable head of the church, than was Henry VIII. the self-created Pope of our own ecclesiastical constitution. Shew me a worse man among all that abhorred race, or a more consummate tyrant over the consciences of men.

* The Curates of our church, in many cases are as culpable with respect to non-residence, as the Bishops and Rectors, and Vicars. In my own neighbourhood, and mostly in my own parish, we have upwards of twelve chapels, where there is no resident Clergyman. It is much the same in other parts of the kingdom.

The reader will find several of these defects of the Church of England, touched upon by Burnet in the conclusion of the history of his Own Times.—I add,

My lord S—h has got a mistress, of whom he is grown weary. On condition the Rev. A. B. will marry her and make her an honest woman, he shall be Rector of such a living in the gift of his lordship.

The living of C—h is in the gift of Mr. G—t; he has got a daughter; if the Rev. Ch. P—s will marry her, he shall be presented to the church.

Mr. G—n has a son, who is neither fit for law, physic, or the army. He has such a living in his patronage. This rip of a son shall be trained to the church, and be the incumbent of the family Rectory.

My Lord D—n has got four sons; one shall enjoy the title and estate; another shall go into the army, and be made a general; another shall go to sea, and become an admiral; the fourth shall be trained to the church, and be promoted to a bishopric.

Sir P—r P—r has left his gift in a Rectory, of the value of 2000 pounds a year. The Rev. G. W. agrees to give him five thousand pounds in hand, and five hundred a year for ten years.

In this manner are daily bartered the souls of men, like sheep in a market!—Is it probable that such a state of things should be maintained for many ages or years longer? Surely the Legislature of the country ought to take these abuses into consideration, and endeavour to remove them. If there be a God who judgeth the earth, he cannot look upon such abominations with indifference.

are moved by the Holy Ghost to preach the Gospel, when we are moved by nothing more than a desire to obtain a good-living and, perhaps, even deny that there is any Holy Ghost?—to our reading one species of doctrines in the desk, and preaching directly opposite in the pulpit.

Abundance of persons, moreover, object to several things in the 39 Articles of Religion—to several things in the book of Homilies—and, above all, to the imposition of subscription to any human creeds and explications of doctrines whatever.* No man, or set of men upon earth as it seems to them, has a right to demand any such thing of a fellow Christian.

Abuses of a similar kind have brought destruction upon other countries, and shall England alone be permitted thus to play the devil, and no notice taken of us by the moral governour of the world? Such things are indefensible, and make one blush for the church, in which it is possible they should take place.

The valuable preferments in our Church, are almost universally obtained by money, or by interest; merit having little or nothing to do in the business. There are, however, several exceptions to this general rule, under the government of his present Majesty. But, my indignation constrains me to add, that Maurice, the present worthy author of *Indian Antiquities*, &c. &c.—O shame to a venal age!—is left to starve upon a distant and laborious curacy of fifty pounds a year. See his own account in the *History of Hindostan*, vol. i. p. 119, 120, quarto.

“Ye bards of Britain, break the useless lyre,
And rend, disdainful, your detested lays;
Who now shall dare to letter’d fame aspire,
Devotes to penury his hapless days.”

See Maurice’s fine elegiac Poem on the death of Sir Wm. Jones.

* It may be farther observed, that subscription to the 39 Articles hath kept many a good man out of the church, but not many bad ones.

“The requiring subscription to the thirty-nine articles,” Bishop Burnet says, “is a great imposition.”

I remember an anecdote concerning the famous William Whiston and Lord Chancellor King, which is not foreign to our purpose. Whiston being one day in discourse with the Chancellor, who was brought up a dissenter at Exeter, but had conformed, a debate arose about signing articles which men do not believe, for the sake of preferment. This the Chancellor openly justified, “because,” said he, “we must not lose our usefulness for scruples.” Whiston, who was quite of an opposite opinion, asked his lordship, “If in his court they allowed of such prevarication?” He answered, “We do not.” “Then,” said Whiston, “suppose God Almighty should be as just in the next world, as my lord Chancellor is in this, where are we then?”

Can any thing in the whole absurd system of Popery be more improper, than to make every young man, without exception, subscribe, when he becomes a member of either of our English universities, he believes from his soul, *ex animo*, that every thing contained in the articles, homilies, common prayer, and offices of ordination, is agreeable to the word of God? when in all ordinary cases, he has never seriously and attentively read either one or another of them? How is it likely, that a boy, raw from school, should be competent to such a task? And, if he is to subscribe upon the faith of others, on the same principle he may subscribe to the Mass-book, the Koran, or any other book whatever.

After a careful examination, I, for my own part, am constrained to object, *pede et manu*, to several things in the 141 Canon, and consider the requirement, on oath, of canonical obedience to the Bishop of the diocese where we officiate, as one of the most detestable instances of antichristian imposition that ever was exercised over a body of Clergy.* And yet, after we have gotten our education, at a considerable expence, possibly at the expence of our whole fortune, we must take this abhorred oath, or renounce the profession to which we have been trained, after our fortune, with which we should have begun business, is gone, and the proper time of life expired. These things ought not so to be.—Let it be observed, however, that this is not the fault of the Bishops, but of the Constitution. It is one of the existing laws of the establishment, and cannot be dispensed with as things now stand; and the Bishops are as much bound to administer the oath, as we are to take it.

Moreover, there are not a few persons again, who object to some things in the Baptismal office—in the office of Confirmation—in the office for the sick—in the Communion

* The 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 27th, 28th, 29th, 38th, 58th, 72d, 139th, 140th, and 141st, Canons, are most of them peculiarly objectionable. Prior to experience, it would appear highly incredible, that conscientious and liberal-minded Clergymen should be able to swear such kind of obedience. The good Lord pardon his servants, for we surely consider not what we do.

Let any man seriously read, and soberly consider these several Canons, and then judge of their tendency. They contain the very worst part of popery, that is, a spirit of infallibility. They proceed, at least, upon the infallibility of our own church, while we disavow that infallibility, and condemn the pretension in the church of Rome.

office—in the Ordination office—in the Burial office—in the Common Prayer—in the Litany—in Athanasius's Creed—in the Calendar—in our Cathedral worship—in our Spiritual courts—in the management of our Briefs.*

* Many persons have an objection to contribute any thing to Briefs, because they suppose a principal part of the money collected goes into the hands of improper persons. The usual charges attending them, with the collections thereupon, will be best understood from the instance given in Burne's Ecclesiastical Law.

For the parish church of Ravenstondale, in the county of West moreland.

	£.	s.	d.
Lodging the certificate	0	7	6
Fiat and signing	19	4	2
Letters patent	21	18	2
Printing and paper	16	0	0
Teller and Porter	0	5	0
Stamps	13	12	6
Copy of the brief	0	5	0
Portage to and from the stampers	0	5	0
Mats for packing	0	4	0
Portage to the waggons	0	4	0
Carriage to the undertaker at Stafford	1	11	6
Postage of letters and certificate	0	4	8
Clerk's fee	2	2	0

Total of the patent charges	76	3	6
Salary for 9986 briefs at 6d. each	249	13	0
Additional salary for London	5	0	0

The whole charges	£330	16	6
Collection on 9986 briefs	£614	12	9
Charges	330	16	6

Clear Collection

The expence of a brief for St. Mary's Church, in Colchester, is stated in the Gentleman's Mag. for Feb. 1788, at 546l. 19s. 10d.

Thus we see, that according to the more moderate of these cases, if ten briefs are issued in the course of a year, there would be collected upon them the sum of 6146l. 7s. 6d. of which 3308l. 5s. is expended in clearing 2838l. 2s. 6d. for the ten charitable purposes.

But if we take the more extended of these cases, the expence of collecting ten briefs would be 5469l. 18s. 4d. which is within 676l. 9s. 2d. of the whole money in the former case collected?

There is a deduction of a similar kind from public money in St. Michael's Chapel in this town. Fifty pounds a year are ordered by royal grant, to be paid out of the Exchequer to the Mayor of the corporation, for the time being, for the use of the Minister, without fee or reward. Instead of fifty, however, he never receives more than three and thirty. Seventeen pounds are deducted for fees of office. So much for, "without fee or reward!" Charitable dona-

—in the Test and Corporation Acts*—in our Tithe laws.†

There are some again, who earnestly deplore our total want of discipline, and our incomplete toleration—that our Church holds out other terms of communion than the Scripture hath enjoined—and that she is a mightier encourager of ambition among the superior orders of the Clergy, by the several ranks, degrees, honours, and emoluments, which prevail among us. They are firmly persuaded, that the people of every age and country have an unalienable right to choose their own ministers; and that no king, no ruler, no bishop, no lord, no gentleman, no man, or body of men upon earth, has any just claim whatever, to dictate, who shall administer to them in the concerns of their salvation; or to say—You shall think this, believe that, worship here, or abstain from worshipping there.

tions, of every kind, should be reduced as little as possible by those through whose hands they must naturally pass. An undue deduction is a sort of sacrilege, and must be accounted for as such before the Judge Supreme.

The number of Church and Chapel Wardens in England and Wales must be considerably above 20,000. Every one of these takes a solemn oath when he enters upon his office. And who will undertake to prove that nine in ten of these church-officers are not perjured? Certain it is, that the oath is of such a nature, it is next to an impossibility to keep it inviolate. Very few of those gentlemen ever attempt to fulfil their engagements. They make no efforts to avoid the grievous sin of perjury.

* “Hast thou by statute, shov’d from its design,
The Saviour’s feast, his own blest bread and wine,
And made the symbols of atoning grace,
An office-key, a picklock to a place,
That Infidels may prove their title good
By an oath dipp’d in sacramental blood?
A blot that will be still a blot, in spite
Of all that grave apologists may write,
And though a Bishop toil to cleanse the stain,
He wipes and scours the silver cup in vain.”

Cowper’s Poems, vol. 1. p. 122.

See Dr. Sherlock, Dean of Chichester, in favour of the above two Acts, and Hoadly, Bishop of Bangor, in answer to Sherlock.

This celebrated Bishop used to say, “Our liturgical forms ought to be revised and amended, only for our own sakes, though there were no Dissenters in the land.”

† See the article Tithe in Burn’s Ecclesiastical Law; whence it appears that Tithes were not paid in England till the eighth century, and were then given to the Clergy by an act of tyrannical power and usurpation, by two of our Popish and superstitious kings; and, in one of the instances, as a commutation for murder.

For much more than a thousand years, the Christian world was a stranger to religious liberty. Even toleration was unknown till about a century ago. The Clergy, especially, have usually been unfriendly to religious liberty. And when the Act of Toleration was obtained in King William's time, great numbers of men were much against it.—It appears to me, however, that both the name and thing are inconsistent with the very nature of the Gospel of Christ. For, have not I as much right to controul you in your religious concerns, as you have to controul me? To talk of tolerating implies an authority over me. Yet, who but Christ has any such authority? He is a tyrant, a very pope, who pretends to any such thing. These matters will be better understood by and by. The whole Christian world lay in darkness, upon this subject, we have observed for many ages. Dr. Owen was the first I am acquainted with, who wrote in favour of it, in the year 1648. Milton followed him about the year 1658, in his Treatise of the Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes. And the immortal Locke followed them both with his golden Treatise on Toleration in 1689. But notwithstanding these, and many other works which have since been written on the same subject, much still remains to be done in this country. Locke's book has not yet been generally read and understood. Though we have had the honour of being among the first of the nations, which obtained a large portion of civil and religious freedom, others are now taking the lead of us, on the rights of conscience. And it does not appear to many, that we ever can be a thoroughly united and happy people, till every good subject enjoys equal civil privileges, without any regard to religious sects and opinions. If a man be a peaceable, industrious, moral, and religious person, and an obedient subject to the civil government under which he lives, let his religious views of things be what they may, he seems to have a just claim to the enjoyment of every office, privilege, and emolument of that government. And till this is in fact the case I apprehend, there never can be a settled state of things. There will be an eternal enmity between the governing and the governed; an everlasting struggle for superiority. But when every member of society enjoys equal privileges with his fellow members, the bone of contention is removed, and there is nothing for which they should any longer be at

enmity. Equal and impartial liberty; equal privileges and emoluments, are, or should be, the birth-right of every member of civil society; and would be the glory of any government to bestow upon all its serious, religious, and morally-acting citizens, without any regard to the sect or party to which they belong. Talents and integrity alone should be the *sine qua nons* to recommend any man to the notice of people in power. This, it should seem, would make us a united and happy people.

As we have been speaking on the subject of the Patronage of Livings, it may be worth while still farther to observe, that the Bishop of — enjoys very considerable privileges of this nature, which have, on a late occasion, been shamefully abused. Not less than 130 presentations belong to him. A certain episcopal gentleman of that diocese, knowing the extensive emoluments he was likely to be possessed of in this way, brought his son up to the church; and when he came of proper age, bestowed first one living upon him, and then another, as they became vacant, to a very considerable amount, which this son enjoys at this day. He is now one of our dignified Clergymen, and in possession of a very unreasonable number of valuable preferments, to most of which he pays extremely little personal attention. He takes care, however, to secure the fleece, the devil may take the flock.—John x. 1—18.

Another Son of Aaron, in a neighbouring district, which might be named, possesses preferments in the church, by the procurement of his episcopal father, to the amount of 2000 pounds a year. He has for a long season been extremely attentive to his tythes; but hardly ever man paid less attention to the salvation of the souls of his people, and the sacred duties of his office. Seldom, indeed, does he appear among the former, less frequently still does he attend the proper duties of the latter. Fifty or sixty pounds a year he reluctantly pays to a journeyman Parson, to supply his own lack of service; but like master, like man; they are a miserable couple together; the one is penurious, the other dissolute. What must the condition of the flock be, under the care of two such wretched shepherds?

I will mention a third curious instance of clerical sagacity. A certain Rectory not fifty miles from this place, is said to

be of the value of near 2000 pounds a year. A kind young lady, whose friends have sufficient interest with the patron, falls in love with a wicked, swearing, dashing officer in the army, and marries him. That a comfortable maintenance may be secured for the happy pair, it is agreed, that the gentleman shall change the colour of his clothes, apply himself to the attainment of a smattering of Latin and Greek, and admit himself a member of one of our famous Universities.— There he actually now is, qualifying himself to take possession of the bouncing Benefice. The incumbent being dead, a pliable parson is put in for a time as a *locum tenens*. And when the *quandum* officer has obtained his proper credentials, this worthy Levite must resign all his *fat pigs* in favour of this Son of Mars. The white washed officer will then come forward, and declare in the face of God and man, with a lie in his mouth, that “he trusts he is moved by the Holy Ghost to preach the gospel.”

If these were solitary instances of improper proceedings in church-matters, it would not be worth while to notice them in this manner. But alas! they are only specimens of what is by no means uncommon, where valuable livings are concerned. O! were the business of private patronage and presentation thoroughly investigated, and laid before the public, the picture would be highly disgusting to every serious mind, and call for reformation with a tone not easy to be resisted.

It is remarkable, that the ecclesiastical and civil parts of our constitution are, in some respects, in opposition one to the other; for the former, in the book of Homilies, especially, holds forth the doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance, while the latter is founded, by the compact at the Revolution, on the reciprocal rights of king and people. In this respect, therefore, as well as in several others, a reformation is highly desirable. Every clergyman particularly should see and feel this, who is obliged to subscribe *ex animo*, that all and every thing contained in the book of Common Prayer, &c. is agreeable to the Sacred Writings.

I add a second circumstance, which seems a hardship to the enlightened and conscientious part of the clergy. When we baptize children, we thank God “that it hath pleased him to regenerate them with the Holy Spirit, to receive them for

his own children by adoption, and to incorporate them into his holy church." When the same children are presented to the Bishop for confirmation, he also addresses the Divine Being as having "vouchsafed to regenerate them by water and the Holy Ghost, and as having given unto them the forgiveness of all their sins;" while many of them are as vile young rogues as ever existed. Then, when we come to bury them, we dare do no other than send them all to heaven, though many of those we commit to the earth have been as wicked in life as men well can be on this side hell. This surely is a great hardship. Yet we have no remedy. We must do it, or forfeit our roast beef and plumb pudding.

But what I mean to infer from this view of the matter here, is, that if the doctrines of baptismal regeneration and final perseverance be true; every member of the church of England is as sure of heaven when he dies, as if he were already there. I leave those whom it may concern to draw the natural inference. How is this consistent with the 17th article of religion?

There is another circumstance in our public offices, which seems to affect the credit of our church, and the comfort of its ministers. The morning service formerly consisted of three parts, which were used at three different times in the forenoon. These are now thrown into one, and all used at the same time. Supposing each service taken singly to be ever so unexceptionable; the conjunction of them renders the whole full of repetition. By this absurd union, the Lord's prayer is always repeated five times every Sunday morning, and on sacrament days, if there happen to be a baptism and a churching, it is repeated no less than eight times, in the space of about two hours. Use may reconcile us to any thing, how absurd soever it be—witness the popish ceremonies. Now let us suppose; that any of the Sectaries of the country should, in their public devotions, be guilty of the same tautology, what should we think and say of them? Should we not conclude they were mad?

By the same absurd conjunction of the three ancient services into one, we are obliged by the laws of our church to pray for the king, no less than five times every Lord's day morning; and even six on communion day. If I were a Bish-

op, or a rich Pluralist, or a fat Rector, my eyes, for any thing I know, might be so far blinded with gold dust, that I should not see these imperfections of our public service; but, as it is, I do see them, and feel them, and groan under them every Sabbath day of my life. They may love such things that will, I confess I do not.

Some of the objections, which are usually made to several parts of our ecclesiastical code of doctrines and laws, it will be granted by every candid person, are of no great consequence in themselves; but as they respectively constitute a part of the general system, and are connected with other things of a more serious and objectionable nature; and as we are compelled to swear obedience to all the Canons,[*] and subscribe, *ex animo*, to all and every thing contained in the Common Prayer, &c. as being agreeable to the Holy Scriptures; the least deviations from those Scriptures become great and weighty. And though there can be no solid objection to the doctrines and ceremonies of the Establishment, in general; yet, seeing there are some things which certainly are reprehensible, and those too of no very indifferent nature, the imposition of them in a manner so solemn is an extremely great hardship, and not to be justified upon any principle of expedience whatever. There is not a Bishop in England who does not continually transgress one or more of the 141 Canons; and, I am persuaded also, there is not an episcopal character in the nation, who can lay his hand upon his heart, and appeal to heaven, that he believes all and every thing which he subscribes. Why then not strive to repeal what is faulty? Why not ease the labouring consciences of those Clergymen, who are upright in the land?

These, and some other matters, which might be brought

[*] This hardly appears to be the true construction of this celebrated oath, the words of which are "I, A. B. do swear, that I will perform true and canonical obedience to the Bishop of C. and his successors, in all things lawful and honest:" the meaning of which may possibly be, that the juror shall obey the Bishop in all those points where the canon law may require such obedience, so far as is consistent with the rules of the common law, and the dictates of common honesty. Were the oath of that latitude contended for by our author, there would certainly not be a clergyman in the kingdom exempt from the sin of most deliberate perjury; yet the terms of the oath are obscure. *Editor.*

forward more at large, seem, to many very well informed and respectable persons, truly objectionable, and strong indications, that we are not so far removed from the old meretricious lady of Babylon, as we would willingly have the world to believe*. Among the several Protestant establishments, we must, they fear, be, at least, considered as the eldest daughter of that first-born of wickedness†.

That I am not singular in supposing there are several things wrong in the Church-Establishment of this country, is evident from the words of Bishop Watson in his reply to Mr. Gibbon: "There are," says this able advocate for regenerated Christianity, "many worthless doctrines, many superstitious observances, which the fraud or folly of mankind have every where annexed to Christianity, especially in the Church of Rome, as essential parts of it. If you take these sorry appendages to Christianity for Christianity itself, as preached by Christ, and by the Apostles—you quite mistake its nature‡.

Many of our Bishops and Clergy will complain in this manner in private, and some few in public, that various things are wrong and want mending: but there are exceedingly few who will speak out, remonstrate, and use their influence, that things may be put upon a more defensible footing. We keep reading what we do not approve,—the damnable sentences in Athanasius's Creed for instance,—professing what we do not believe, subscribing what we know or suspect to be wrong, and swearing to observe laws, which are truly horrible in their tendency, all our lives long, for the sake of a little paltry food and raiment, and a moiety of worldly honour.—Is this the way to glory, and honour, and riches everlasting?—If Wickliffe, and Luther, and

* See the doctrines of the Church of Rome pretty much at large in the 17th Sect. of Simpson's Key to the Prophecies.—The cruelty of that church is horrible. Joseph Mede reckons up 1,200,000 of the Valdenses and Albigenses put to death in 30 years! The same intolerant and persecuting spirit prevailed in our church also for many years after the Reformation, and is not yet perfectly done away.*

* See The Prisoner's Defence against the Rev. George Markham; a well written pamphlet. Brother George cuts but a poor figure in the hands of these Quakers.

† *That Man of Sin—the Son of Perdition—that Wicked.* 2 Thess ii. 3, 8.

‡ Apology for Christianity, Let. 6.

Cranmer, and Ridley, and Latimer, and the glorious army of Martyrs, had acted in the manner we do, no reformation had ever taken place. We should have been Popish priests at this day. The same spirit which keeps us quiet in our several snug Protestant preferments now, would have kept us quiet in our several snug Popish preferments then, if such had been our situation. It is much more easy to fawn, and cringe, and flatter, with Erasmus, than face a frowning world, with Luther, and his noble companions.

From the foregoing short view of these two classes of predictions concerning the Saviour of mankind, and the condition of the Christian Church in the world; every candid and sober-minded man, I think, may see, without the smallest room for deception, that there is something far more than human in the Prophetic Scriptures. It is impossible to account for all these strange coincidences, upon any principles of nature or art whatever. Here is a long series of predictions running through all time, partly fulfilled, partly fulfilling, and partly to be fulfilled. Let any man account for it, without supernatural interposition, if he can. If he cannot, then the Scriptures are of divine original; Jesus is the Saviour of mankind; all the great things foretold shall be accomplished; Infidels and Infidelity shall be confounded world without end; and sound, practical believers in Christ Jesus, of every denomination, shall stand secure and joyful, amidst the convulsion of nations, the subversion of churches, "the wreck of matter, and the crush of worlds."

"Such, in that day of terrors, shall be seen
To face the thunders with a godlike mien.
The planets drop; their thoughts are fix'd above:
The centre shakes: their hearts disdain to move."

Are not abundance of these predictions fulfilling at this very day before our eyes? Is not the religion of Jesus diffusing itself far and wide among the nations of the earth? Did not the corruptions of it commence at a very early period. Did not the Church of Rome assume a universal spiritual empire in the seventh century, and temporal dominion in the eighth?* Is it not expressly predicted, that the illegitimate

* It is remarkable, that Mahomet began his imposture in the very year that the Bishop of Rome, by virtue of a grant from the

empire of that Church should continue the precise period of 1260 years? Does it not seem that those 1260 years are upon the point of expiring? Were not great changes to take place among the kingdoms, into which the Roman empire was to be divided, about the expiration of the said term? Have not great changes already taken place in those kingdoms? Were not the nations, which, for so many ages, had given their power unto the Beast, to turn against that Beast, and use means for its destruction? * Is not this part of the prophecy also, in a good degree, fulfilled at the present moment? Have not all the Catholic powers forsaken his Holiness of Rome in the time of his greatest need? And is not he, who, a few ages ago, made all Europe tremble at the thunder of his voice, now become weak like other men? Are not the claws of the Beast now cut, and his teeth drawn, so that he can no longer either scratch or bite? † Is he not already, in our own day, and before our own eyes, stripped of his temporal dominion? And doth not the triple crown, even now, dance upon his head? or rather, has he not for ever lost all right and title to wear it? Is it not extremely remarkable, and a powerful confirmation of the truth of Scripture prophecy, that just 1260 years ago from the present 1798, in the very beginning of the year 538, Belisarius put an end to the empire of the Goths at Rome, leaving no power therein but the Bishop of that Metropolis?

wicked tyrant Phocas, first assumed the title of Universal Pastor; and thereon claimed to himself that supremacy, which he hath been ever since endeavouring to usurp over the church of Christ. This was in the year 606, when Mahomet retired to his cave to forge his impostures; so that Antichrist seems at the same time to set both his feet upon Christendom together; the one in the east, and the other in the west.—Prideaux's Life of Mahomet, p. 13.

A valuable Correspondent, thoroughly acquainted with the prophetic Scriptures, gives it as his opinion, that we are now in the second period of the seventh vial. Rev. xvi. 17—21. "The battle of the great God has been, and is fighting. The sacking of the nations is come. The Man of sin who has been sitting in the temple of God 1260 years, all but a few; whom God hath been consuming with the spirit of his mouth since the Reformation; whom he is now ready to destroy with the appearance of his presence, we see is ready for the blow."

* Consult the seventeenth chapter of Revelation.

† See the treatment which the present Pope of Rome has received from the French. They even took the ring from his finger, and deprived him of his snuff! Ungenerous Frenchmen! Cruel conquerors!

Read these things in the prophetic Scriptures;* compare them coolly with the present state of Europe, and then, I say again, deny the truth of Divine Revelation, if you can. Open your eyes, and behold these things accomplishing in the face of the whole world. This thing is not done in a corner.

It would be well, my Countrymen, if ye would seriously consider still further, that the opposers of the Gospel are no other than tools and instruments in the hands of that Redeemer,† whom ye so cordially despise, and rashly reject. He sitteth in heaven at the right hand of power, and laugheth at all your puny and malicious efforts to impede the interests of his kingdom.‡ He permits his word, however, to be tried like as silver is tried. But the more it is opposed, the more completely will it be refined. The more it is scrutinized,

* There is an astonishing chain of prophecy in the Sacred Writings; and the argument from thence is invincible. Sir Isaac Newton, Bishop Newton, and several other writers, have treated upon them with effect. The prophetic scheme may be ridiculed, but it can never be answered. Consult Simpson's Key to the prophecies, for a concise view of this indissoluble chain.—Bishops Hurd, Hallifax, Clayton, and others, have written with ability upon these abstruse parts of Sacred Writ. Dr. Aphthorp, Mr. Maclaurin, and Brown, have thrown pretty much light upon them. But of all who have treated upon the book of Revelation, none seems to me to have excelled Lowman.

† See this matter discussed at large in Dr. Gerard's Dissertation, entitled Christianity Confirmed by the Opposition of Infidels.

‡ Would the reader be at the pains to compare the second and hundred and tenth psalms with the history of those persons who in the several ages have set themselves to oppose either the Jewish or Christian dispensations, he could not fail of receiving strong conviction of the truth of these two prophetic compositions. We may, indeed, deny any thing, and turn into ridicule every prophetic accomplishment; as Josephus informs us the Jews did in the last dreadful ruin of his unhappy countrymen. It was familiar with them "to make a jest of divine things, and to deride, as so many senseless tales, and juggling impostures, the sacred oracles of their prophets;" though they were then fulfilling before their eyes, and even upon themselves.

If the reader is disposed to examine another prophecy, I will refer him to the ninth chapter of Daniel. The late eminent Philosopher and Mathematician Ferguson has written a Dissertation upon it, which he concludes in these words: "Thus we have an astronomical demonstration of the truth of this ancient prophecy, seeing that the prophetic year of the Messiah's being cut off, was the very same with the astronomical." Astronomy, p. 373—377.

the more it will be approved. The severity of your criticisms will serve the cause it is intended to overthrow. Your assistance is advantageous to us, though infinitely dangerous to yourselves. Ye are co-operating, unintentionally indeed, with all the zealous servants of Christ, in carrying forward the designs of heaven, in like manner as Judas, with the Jews and Romans, contributed to the fulfilment of the ancient prophecies, and the salvation of the world, in betraying the Lord of glory. The greater the learning, the more rancorous the hatred; the stronger the opposition, the more brilliant the talents of its antagonists; the faster will the kingdom of Messiah come forward, and the more complete and honourable will be the victory.* The Gospel never triumphed more gloriously, in the first ages, than when Celsus and Porphyry drew their pens, Dioclesian and Julian their swords, vowing its annihilation. Truth fears nothing more than inattention. It is too important to be treated with indifference. Opposition calls forth and sharpens the powers of the human mind in its defence. The cause of the Gospel hath ever gained by investigation. Credulity is the bane of it. Sound policy in the Deists would let it alone, and leave it to itself. It was by opposition from all the world that it was originally propagated. When that opposition ceased, and the great ones of the earth smiled upon and fostered it, a worse than Egyptian darkness of ignorance and delusion overspread Christendom.†

*"Christianity may thank its opponents for much new light, from time to time, thrown in on the sublime excellence of its nature, and the manifestation of its truth. Opponents, in some sort are more welcome than its friends, as they do it signal service without running it in debt; and have no demand on our gratitude for the favours they confer. The stronger its adversaries, the greater its triumph: the more it is disputed, the more indisputably will it shine."—YOUNG.

† In the middle ages, such thick clouds of barbarity and ignorance had overwhelmed all schools of literature, that the maxim then current was—*Quanto eris melior grammaticus, tanto pejor theologus*. Espencoccus, who was one of themselves, acknowledges, that amongst their best authors, *Græce nosse suspectum fuerit, Hebraice proprie hæreticum*. Zuinglius and Collinus had like to have lost their lives for meddling with Greek and Hebrew. To give the derivation of the word Hallelujah racked the wits of whole universities. Doctors of Divinity were created, and pronounced most sufficient, who had never read the Bible. Erasmus says, Divines of 80 years of age were all amazement at hearing anything

It is by a revival of that opposition, and probably too, by a revival of the persecution of its most zealous advocates, even unto death, that it must be purified, refined, and restored to its primitive beauty and simplicity. Philosophical unbelievers, as well as intolerant christians, will proceed *per fas atque nefas* to carry a favourite point. Human nature is the same in all, however modified, and whatever our pretensions. The pure Gospel of Christ, too, never had more determined and well-furnished enemies in these latter ages, than Lewis the Fourteenth,* Bolingbroke and Voltaire; never more true and

quoted from St. Paul, and that Preachers of 50 years standing, had never seen the New Testament. Musculus assures us, that multitudes of them never saw the Scriptures in their lives. Amama tells us of the Archbishop of Mentz, that opening the Bible, he said, *In truth, I do not know what this book is, but I perceive that every thing in it is against us.* Cardinal Hosius's persuasion was, that it had been best for the Church, if no Gospel had been written.

The Clergy of the Church of Rome, all through Europe, in the last and present ages, though much superior to those in the middle centuries, are still in a situation truly deplorable. They have had, indeed some very considerable individuals, especially among the Jesuits; but, taking them as a body, there has been a most melancholy deficiency of literary attainments. The French Clergy seem to have excelled those of most other countries, which profess the Romish faith.

Bishop Burnet's Travels will afford the reader considerable information upon the state of Popery in the close of the 17th century, and Dr. John Moore's View of Society and Manners, in Italy, will furnish us with a tolerable knowledge of its present state.

If it had not been for the Reformation, most of the riches of Christendom would at this day have been in the hands of the Clergy. The revenues of the present Archbishop of Mexico are said to be 70,000 pounds a year! The bishopric of Durham is said to be now 20,000 pounds a year. Winchester also is very considerable, and some others are the same.

* It is calculated, that the Roman Catholics, since the rise of persecution, in the seventh or eighth century, to the present time, have butchered, in their blind and diabolical zeal for the Church, no less than fifty millions of Protestant Christians of different descriptions. *Cursed be their anger for it was fierce, and their wrath, for it was cruel.* A righteous Providence is now taking vengeance on them for their horrible transactions! It is about 300 years since the Spaniards discovered America and the West Indies. The Governor of the world has a quarrel with them also for their dreadful cruelties towards the poor unoffending inhabitants.—Twelve millions it is calculated, they butchered on the Continent, besides the many millions who fell in the Islands. Arise, O God, and plead the cause of these thy creatures!

powerful friends. The sword of the first, the philosophy of the second, and the ridicule of the third, have already had very

And is England less guilty, with respect to her trade in human beings:[*] In ages to come, it will scarcely meet with credit, that we, who boast ourselves of being the most free nation upon earth, the most religious people in Europe, and the purest and best constituted church in the world, should have been capable of buying and selling annually, upon an average, 60,000 souls. If there were no other cause, this is enough to bring down the severest of the Divine judgments! No political motives whatever can justify the diabolical traffic. And is it not strange, that when the abolition of this trade had passed the 558 members of the House of Commons, it should not be able to pass the House of Lords, where are assembled 26 Shepherds and Bishops of souls? Blessings on the head of those few worthy Prelates, who pleaded the cause of humanity, and stood forth as the advocates of universal freedom!

We have long enjoyed a large share both of civil and religious liberty. We have made our boast of this privilege, sometimes very insolently insulting other nations, because they did not enjoy the same. And yet we have the impudence, the inhumanity, the cruelty, the horrible villainy, to enslave 60,000 poor helpless souls every year! O England!

“Canst thou, and honour’d with a Christian name,
Buy what is woman-born, and feel no shame?
Tread in the blood of innocence, and plead
Experience as a warrant for the deed?
So may the wolf, whom famine has made bold
To quit the forest and invade the fold;
So may the ruffian, who, with ghostly glide,
Dagger in hand, steals close to your bed-side;
Not he, but his emergence forc’d the door,
He found it inconvenient to be poor.”

Cowper's Poems.

Without being carried away with the violence of any party whatever on this great question, I think, it is clear, upon every Christian principle, and on every principle of sound policy, that the importation of fresh slaves into the islands should be absolutely prohibited; and that every proper mean should be used to meliorate the condition of those who are already imported. Much wisdom and experience would be necessary to enable any man to determine what means would be most proper for these purposes.

It is to be feared we have also a long and dreadful account to settle with Divine Providence for our rapacious conduct in the East Indies. This wonderful country has at the same time enriched and ruined every nation which hath possessed it. So the Spaniards, by a just re-action of a righteous Providence, have been enriched and ruined, by the possession of Mexico and Peru. Every man who goes to the East Indies, with mercantile views.

considerable effects. The French themselves at this moment, though ready to overturn heaven and earth to banish the Sa-

goes to make his fortune. This is frequently done, and too often in ways the most dishonourable. In the year 1769 three millions of the natives of Bengal perished for want, through the avarice and rascality of a few Englishmen!

“Hast thou, though suck’d at fair freedom’s breast,
Exported slav’ry to the conquer’d East,
Pull’d down the tyrants India served with dread,
And rais’d thyself a greater in their stead,
Gone thither arm’d and hungry, return’d full,
Fed from the richest veins of the Mogul,
A despot big with power obtained by wealth,
And that obtained by rapine and by stealth?
With Asiatic vices stor’d thy mind,
But left their virtues and thine own behind.
And having truck’d thy soul, brought home the fee,
To tempt the poor to sell himself to thee?”

Cowper’s Poems.

For numerous re-actions of Providence, consult 29th and 30th sections of Simpson’s Key to the Prophecies.

By way of softening our resentment against the traders in human creatures, it may be here observed, that the most polished of the ancient nations were over-run with slaves of the most oppressed kind. Every person acquainted with profane history knows well the miserable condition of the Helots in Sparta.

Even in Athens, where slaves were treated with less inhumanity, they found their condition so intolerable, that 20,000 of them deserted during one of the wars in which they were engaged.

About the year 310 before Christ, the small state of Attica alone contained 400,000 slaves.

Slavery greatly abounded in the Roman empire also. Among them, slaves were frequently mutilated in their youth, and abandoned in their old age. Some whom age or infirmities had rendered unfit for labour, were conveyed to a small uninhabited island in the Tiber, where they were left to perish with famine. In short, all sorts of punishments, which the wickedness, wantonness, cruelty, or caprice of their owners could inflict, were frequently made use of. The Roman writers are full of horrid tales to this purport.

Such has been the general practice of mankind in every age preceding the introduction of the Gospel! And it is the introduction and profession of that Gospel, which renders the dealing in slaves so enormously wicked! A Christian buying and selling slaves! A man who professes, that the leading law of his life is, to do as he would be done by, spending his time, and amassing a fortune, in buying and selling his fellow-men!

——“Is there not some chosen curse,
Some hidden thunder in the stores of heaven,

viour out of the world he created by his power, redeemed by his blood, and governs by his wisdom, are but tools in his hand, to bring forward his designs; to purge the Gospel of its contracted impurities; to manifest to mankind the truth of the prophetic Scriptures; to punish the kingdoms of their abominations; to rouse them from their long sleep of guilty security; to remove all the rubbish of superstition and human ordinances out of the way; and to bring in the reign of universal righteousness, when contending nations shall learn war no more. Much is to be done, and they are suitable instruments, admirably adapted to answer these purposes of Divine Providence. They are made with this view. A virtuous nation would not be fit for the business. In the mean time, there is great reason to apprehend, there will be no small degree of human misery throughout the several countries professing Christianity, before these halcyon days come forward.

It is a melancholy circumstance, that before the present French war broke out, there were fought, in little more than a century, a hundred bloody battles by land, besides what were fought by sea, between the several Christian governments of Europe. This state of things is awful. It is the pouring out the vials of God's wrath upon the churches. The time, however, is fast approaching, when these miseries shall have an end. The Beast shall be destroyed, and his dominion taken away. The several kingdoms which have supported him shall be overturned. False, superstitious, and idolatrous doctrines, rites, and ceremonies, shall all be swept off, and the pure, simple, unadulterated Gospel of Jesus shall spring up. The present bloody war is of God. The French are God's rod, to scourge the nations of Europe for their unchristian abomina-

Red with uncommon wrath, to blast the man,
Who gains his fortune from the blood of souls?

[*] England will have great reason to exult in the accomplishment of that long-wished-for event, namely, the total abolition of this most abominable traffic. Those faithful men, who industriously and perseveringly promoted it, should be hailed amongst the greatest benefactors of mankind, and posterity shall eternally bless their memory. The greatest statesman of ancient or modern times, the most celebrated heroes, the most enlightened literati, historians, poets, and philosophers, environed with all the splendour of their various works and achievements, shall be eclipsed and almost vanish when put into competition with these illustrious patriots and philanthropists.—*Editor.*

tions. They are God's besom and intended to sweep the Christian church of its filth, and nonsense, and superstition, and idolatry. It is true, they have no such intention. They mean no good to the Gospel. But when the Lord has accomplished his whole work upon the corrupt Christian nations and churches, then he will lay them aside, cause the indignation to cease, and pure undefiled religion shall spring up. This can never be, till the rubbish is removed. The superstitions of Popery must first be done away. One generation, or perhaps two or three, must first be swept off, and in the course of a few centuries, those, who shall then live, will see more peaceable, more happy, and more glorious days. But it will be long ere the nonsensical superstitious doctrines and practices of Antichrist can be rooted out of the several popish countries. And it is exceedingly probable, that Infidelity must first become almost general among the several orders of the people, before pure, genuine, purged Christianity can prevail. We Protestants who live in England, and have never been abroad, can have no proper idea of the poor, low, silly, superstitious state, in which the minds of the common people are kept by the mummary and art of the Priests, in all the Catholic countries.[*] In Naples, which contains only about 300,000 inhabitants there are 300 churches, 120 convents of men, and 40 of women. The mother-church is dedicated to St. Januarius, and when any calamitous events arise, this St Januarius is applied to, his image is carried about in procession and thousands of prayers are offered up to this supposed Patron, for deliverance.† Processions of a similar kind are extremely common at Rome, and all over Italy, and, indeed, all through the catholic world. At Madrid, the capital of Spain, the Virgin Mary, it seems, is the most favourite Protectress.—Abundance of ceremonies are here continually carrying on in honour of the mother of our Lord. In all Madrid not a sin-

[*] The late treacherous occupation of Portugal by the modern Carthaginians, however lamentable in its immediate consequences, will, as in other cases, ultimately benefit mankind: as their work appears to be the destruction of Papal tyranny; or, as they call it, "the melting-down of superstition." Spain will probably share a similar fate very speedily. What will become of unhappy Ireland?

Editor.

† See a droll account of this pretended Saint in Moore's *View of Society and Manners in Italy*, vol. ii. p. 274—291.

gle street or house is to be found which is not decorated with a portrait or bust of the Virgin. Incredible is the annual consumption of flowers made use of in Spain for crowning the Virgin's image; incredible the number of hands, which are continually employed from morning till night in dressing her caps, turning her petticoats, and embroidering her ruffles.— Every Spaniard regards the Virgin in the light of his friend, his confidante, his mistress, whose whole attention is directed to himself, and who is perpetually watching over his happiness. Hence the name of *Mary* hangs incessantly upon his lips, mixes in all his compliments, and forms a part of all his wishes. In speaking, in writing, his appeal is always to the Virgin, who is the guarantee of all his promises, the witness of all his transactions. It is in the name of the holy, blessed Virgin, that the ladies intrigue with their gallants. write billet-doux, send their portraits, and appoint nocturnal assignations.

The funeral pomp and parade which characterise the Spaniards at their burials of the dead. is inexpressibly great.— Upwards of a hundred carriages, five or six hundred priests, and monks, with at least 2000 flambeaus, form the ordinary appendage of a common funeral.*

These things are deplorable, and shew the very low, degraded, and superstitious state of that nation.

The use of the Inquisition, however, in that pope-priest-ridden country, is still more shocking than all their other superstitions put together.

What a curse have the Priests of Christendom been to Christendom! How many precious souls have been led into the pit of destruction by an ungodly, superstitious, and idolatrous priesthood! I was almost going to say, that we Parsons have been the means of damning more souls, than ever we were a mean of saving! From our profession it is, that iniquity diffuses itself through every land! God forgive us! we have been too bad! instead of being a blessing, and spreading health and salvation through the nations, as is the undoubted design of the Gospel of Christ, and the Christian ministry, we have been playing into each others hands, have

* Vide Monthly Magazine for Feb. 1798.

erected a huge fabric of worldly dominion for ourselves, [*] and have brought down, and are at this moment bringing down, the Divine judgments upon every country, where we have erected our standard. We Protestants will be ready enough to allow, that this hath been the case in the Catholic states: but it is also true, if I mistake not, of the Protestant Bishops and Clergy. We will not sacrifice one inch of the secular dominion we have, through the weakness and folly of men, obtained; no not to save the kingdom from destruction! The secular and superstitious conduct of the Heathen Priesthood brought ruin upon the Pagan nations; the secular and superstitious conduct of the Jewish Priests brought ruin upon the Jewish nation; the secular and superstitious conduct of the Catholic Priests hath brought ruin upon the Catholic nations; and the same kind of secular and superstitious conduct of our Protestant Bishops and Clergy will involve us in similar destruction. Nothing can prevent this but the ecclesiastical reform so frequently mentioned and alluded to in these papers! What reason is there to be given, why a wicked, careless, lukewarm, and secular Protestant Priesthood should not be punished as well as those of other denominations? As our light and privileges are the greater, we may justly expect our punishment will be the more severe. If there be a God in heaven who regards the actions of men, and who respects the completion of his own predictions, we may be assured the day of darkness is coming, unless prevented by a change in our conduct. See Jeremiah xviii. 1—10.

Surely at the present dread period, we, of all people, ought to take the alarm, and use every endeavour to remove whatever may subject us to divine judgments. My daily prayer is, for the safety, welfare, and prosperity of my king and country. But when I look around me, I cannot help being exceedingly affected at the present melancholy state of most of the neighbouring nations. The sun, moon, and stars, are all darkened; and the powers of heaven are shaken. Is not the sun set and perished in France and Poland? Are not Holland, Flanders, Switzerland, Geneva, Genoa, Sardinia, Savoy, Treves, Cologne, Venice, Rome, the Italian dominions of the

[*] It is painful to contemplate that the Bishops should be discovering an active disposition to increase the extent of their worldly dominion.—*Editor.*

house of Austria, and the little sea-girt empire of the knights of Malta, are not all these revolutionized and fallen? Do not the kings of Prussia, Naples, Spain, and Portugal, and even the emperor himself, at this moment tremble on their thrones? And doth not the same power, which hath accomplished, is accomplishing, and will accomplish similar changes in all the continental states, denounce the most complete destruction to the British empire? What then can save us from the threatened calamity? Nothing under heaven, but a national reformation, by which we may engage the divine protection. Hitherto the Lord hath wonderfully helped us; and I pray God effectually to help us in time to come: but this we have no solid reason to expect, for any great number of years, unless the rubbish of human ordinances shall be removed out of Christ's kingdom, the church, and a very general moral and religious change take place among us. Oh! that I could sound an alarm into the heart of our excellent king, and into the hearts of our princes, nobles, bishops, clergy, gentry, tradesmen: and into the hearts also of all the inferior orders of society! It is reform or ruin! The 1260 prophetic years are expiring! Reduce the Redeemer's religion to its primitive purity and simplicity, or he will come in judgment, and plead his own rights.* Let any man, any bishop, any clergyman, say and prove that these things are not so, and I will openly retract all that is here advanced. The Popish constitution is overturned in Rome this very year; and 1260 years from this time the Roman Pontiff began his secular dominion in that proud and idolatrous metropolis of the Christian world, through the expulsion of the Goths by Belisarius the Roman general!†—*All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower*

* The propagators of Infidelity in France, before the Revolution, raised among themselves and spent no less a sum annually than 900,000 pounds sterling, in purchasing, printing, and dispersing books to corrupt the minds of the people, and prepare them for desperate measures. And similar means are at this moment carrying forward in this country, in no small degree, to accomplish the same purposes. While we parsons are asleep, crying peace and safety, the enemy is sowing his tares!

† I mention the Goths and Belisarius again in this place, because I wish to draw the reader's attention to this remarkable accomplishment of Scripture prophecy.

thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth for ever!

And shall we be so blind and selfish as to suppose, that all the rest of the nations shall fall, and we alone be preserved? Amen! Amen! May my king and my country live for ever!

We readily grant, therefore, you see, my countrymen, that the corruptions of Christianity shall be purged and done away; and we are persuaded the wickedness of Christians, so called, the lukewarmness of professors, and the reiterated attacks of Infidels upon the Gospel, shall all, under the guidance of infinite wisdom, contribute to accomplish this end. The lofty looks of lordly Prelates shall be brought low; the supercilious airs of downy Doctors and perjured Pluralists shall be humbled; the horrible sacrilege of Non-residents, who shear the fleece, and leave the flock thus despoiled to the charge of uninterested hirelings that care not for them, shall be avenged on their impious heads. Intemperate priests, avaricious clerks, and buckish parsons, those curses of Christendom, shall be confounded. All secular Hierarchies in the Church shall be tumbled into ruin; lukewarm formalists, of every denomination, shall call to the rocks and mountains to hide them from the wrath of the Lamb. Infidels, seeing the prophecies accomplished before their eyes, shall submit themselves to the long-resisted, but gentle yoke of the Gospel. Wicked and openly profane men, men of rank, especially those corrupters and debauchers of the lower orders of society, shall be converted, and become righteous, or swept from the earth with the besom of destruction. The invidious disdain of illiberal Sectarists shall be succeeded by equal and universal benevolence; and the Lord Jesus Christ alone shall be exalted in that day.* The Bible, my countrymen, the Bible, stripped of every human appendage, shall rise superior to all opposi-

* It may be very much questioned whether the united wisdom of men be equal to such effectual reformation in Church and State as may be thought perfectly consistent with the purity and simplicity of the Gospel. In civil matters, it may be there is no government devised by human wisdom, better calculated to promote the liberty, prosperity, and happiness of a country than our own, by King, Lords, and Commons, supposing all abuses displaced. Nor do I see any valid objection to the three orders in the Church, of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. It is certain they have prevailed from the days of the

tion; and shall go down with the revolving ages of time, enlivening the faith, enlivening the hope, enkindling the love, enflaming the zeal, and directing the conduct of men, till the world shall be no more.

“The cloud-capt towers, the gorgeous palaces
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherits shall dissolve,
And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,
Leave not a wreck behind.”

But the promises and threatenings of the Holy Writings shall be receiving their awful completion, upon believers and unbelievers. throughout those never ending ages, which shall commence when the present scene of things shall be fully terminated. Let my countrymen, therefore,

Apostles, in some form or other. But here we have abundance of things to be removed, which are inconsistent with the scriptural model. And if our Governors, ecclesiastical and civil, are determined to hold fast what they have gotten, and suffer no abuses to be rectified, the great Head of the Church, it may be fully expected, will arise, ere long, and plead his own cause, in slaughter and blood. It is morally impossible that the present degenerate state of things should continue another century. Without a thorough reformation, both in civil and religious concerns (and even such a reformation is big with danger) a much shorter time must subvert the present order of things, not only through Europe in general, but in England particularly. God grant we may have wisdom to do that of our own accord, which must otherwise be done by constraint. When the iniquity of the Amorites is full, their enemies will receive commission from above to enter their land, and to kill and destroy.

The charges and denunciations against the several culprits mentioned in the above page may seem too severe to some gentle spirited persons, who call evil good and good evil; but in my opinion, fall greatly below the propriety of the case. The offending Clergy are the curse and the bane of the country, and the wrath of God shall smoke against the faithless shepherds of Christ's flock.—Men of rank likewise are sometimes uncommonly blameable. I myself have known some, who have corrupted and debauched the whole neighbourhood where they lived. The late L—d S—h was a pest in this way. The late S—r W—m M—h also did much mischief among the young men and women all around the place where he resided for several miles. No young person, of more decent appearance than ordinary, could well escape his allurements. Boys and girls were equally his prey. We have many now living, also, who are extremely culpable; and when the scourge of Heaven visits the land, it shall fall peculiarly on them.

“Read and revere the Sacred page, a page
 Where triumphs immortality; a page
 Which not the whole creation could produce;
 Which not the conflagration shall destroy;
 In nature’s ruins not one letter lost.”

In the mean time be persuaded also to reflect upon our respective situations. Suppose that we who believe in the Saviour of mankind are mistaken? Upon your own principles we are safe. But suppose you are mistaken your loss is immense. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? You know who it is that hath said too—He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him—he is condemned already!—Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. Is there no danger to be apprehended from these, and similar declarations, with which the Sacred writings so largely abound? We are persuaded there is danger, and such as is of the most serious kind which can befall a rational creature.

“Know’st thou the importance of a soul immortal?
 Behold the midnight glory: worlds on worlds!
 Amazing pomp! Redouble this amaze;
 Ten thousand add; and twice ten thousand more;
 Then weigh the whole; one soul outweighs them all;
 And calls th’ astonishing magnificence
 Of unintelligent creation poor.”

Treating with just contempt, therefore, the scoffs and sneers (for solid arguments we know they have none) of the whole unbelieving body of our countrymen, whether among the nobility and gentry of the land, or among the ignoble vulgar, the beasts of the people; our determination is, whatever we gain or lose beside, by the grace of God, to secure the salvation of this immortal part. No harm can happen to us in so doing. We are secure in every event of things. If the fourscore scourges of the Almighty, the sword, famine, noisome beasts, and pestilence, should receive their commission to run through the land, we are yet assured it shall be well with them that fear God. Sound religion, rational piety, solid virtue, and a lively sense of the divine favour, will injure no man. They will render us respected, at least by the

wise and and good, while we live, and be a comfortable evidence of our felicity when we die.* In the mean time, if it be enquired where present happiness is to be found? May we not say with confidence,

“No doubt ’tis in the human breast,
When clam’rous conscience lies at rest,
Appeas’d by love divine:
Where peace has fix’d her snow-white throne,
And faith and holy hope are known,
And grateful praise erects her shrine.

After all, suppose there should be no future existence—what do we lose?—But, if there should be a future state?—“and that there is, all nature cries aloud through all her works”—then what shall become of the philosophic Infidel; the immoral Christian; and the mere nominal Professor? If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

“What can preserve my life! or what destroy!
An angel’s arm can’t snatch me from the grave:
Legions of angels can’t confine me there.”

Reflect, then, my Countrymen, upon your situation. Be the Scriptures true or false; be Jesus Christ a vile impostor, or the only Saviour of the world; yet we are undeniably reasonable creatures, and under the moral government of God. This is no mere notion, that may be true or false; but a plain matter of fact, which every man may be sensible of by looking into his own bosom. Natural religion, therefore, at least, must be binding upon us. And that also requires, on pain of the highest penalties, that we should deny all ungodliness, all impiety and profaneness—and worldly lusts, all irregular secular pleasures and pursuits—and live soberly, chastely, temperately;—righteously, doing strict justice in all our dealings, between man and man, and shewing mercy to every

* When that fine writer, and pious author, Mr. William Law, came to die, he seemed to enjoy the full assurance of faith; “Away with these filthy garments,” said the expiring Saint; “I feel a sacred fire kindled in my soul, which will destroy every thing contrary to itself, and burn as a flame of divine love to all eternity.”

This learned man, in the latter part of his life, degenerated into all the fooleries of mysticism; and there is some reason to suppose his extravagant notions might be one mean of driving the celebrated Gibbon into a state of infidelity.

child of distress to the utmost of our power—and godlily, religiously, piously, worshipping the Divine Being constantly and conscientiously in public and in private, and zealously endeavouring to please him in every part of our conduct. Deism, as well as Christianity, requires all this. We gain nothing then, but lose a great deal, by rejecting the merciful dispensation of the Gospel, and having recourse to the religion of nature.* For natural religion, equally with revealed, condemns all immoral men; under the penalty of incurring the utmost displeasure of our Maker.

“But then you have the satisfaction to think there is no Devil: by rejecting the Bible you have at least got clear of this bug-bear, with which we frighten children and old women!”

If we should ask, how you know there is no such fallen spirit? You can give no rational answer. Are you acquainted with all the secrets of the invisible world? Your *ipse*

* What a picture does Voltaire draw of the condition of man? and, indeed, though it is very melancholy, it is very just, upon his own principles, that the way of salvation revealed in the Gospel has no foundation in truth.

“Who can without horror,” says this sophister, “consider the whole earth as the empire of destruction? It abounds in wonders; it abounds also in victims; it is a vast field of carnage and contagion!—Every species is without pity; pursued and torn to pieces, through the earth and air and water? In man there is more wretchedness than in all other animals put together. He smarts continually under two scourges, which other animals never feel; anxiety and listlessness in appetite, which make him weary of himself.—He loves life, and yet he knows that he must die. If he enjoy some transient good, for which he is thankful to heaven, he suffers various evils, and is at last devoured by worms. This knowledge is his fatal prerogative; other animals have it not. He feels it every moment, rankling and corroding in his breast. Yet he spends the transient moment of his existence, in diffusing the misery that he suffers; in cutting the throats of his fellow-creatures for pay; in cheating and being cheated; in robbing and being robbed; in serving that he may command; and in repenting of all that he does.—The bulk of mankind are nothing more than a crowd of wretches, equally criminal and unfortunate; and the globe contains rather carcasses than men. I tremble upon a review of this dreadful picture, to find that it implies a complaint against Providence; and I wish that I had never been born!”

Let any man consider well this declaration; afterwards proceed to take a view of the last three months, and dying scenes of Voltaire, and then let him say what this old sinner gained by his boasted Infidelity and Philosophy.

dixit will go no further than ours. We say there is such a Being, and we appeal to all history; especially to the writings of the Old and New Testaments, the evidence of which is such as no man ever did, or ever can fairly answer. The Son of God, the Messenger from the invisible state, hath taught us this doctrine;* and we are firmly persuaded, it is acting a more rational part to give credit to his information, concerning the invisible world than to trust to the vague, uncertain, and contradictory lights of a vain philosophy. What have you to reply?—"There is no such Being in nature."—And so your affirmation or negation is to be the standard of truth!—A little more modesty might become you well: certainly it would make you the more amiable men, and not less comfortable in your own mind.

But, suppose there be no Devil; what do you gain?—Still man is a rational creature, and you are under the moral as well as the natural government of the Divine Being. And if you have been dexterous enough to get clear of one enemy, you have two yet left, the world and your own nature—your lusts and passions within you, and the allurements of visible objects without you. Can you deny the existence of these? And are you perfectly sure, that you shall be able to wage a successful warfare with two such potent adversaries?

You see then, my Countrymen, that when you have hooted the Bible out of the world, proved the Virgin Mary to be a bad woman, Jesus Christ to be an illegitimate child, and annihilated the Devil—wonderful feats! worthy of all praise!—you must not stop here. There is no safety for you, till you have also annihilated the Maker and Governor of the world. Atheism must be your *dernier resort*.† For if there be a God, every immoral man will be, ere long a miserable man.

* The Bible is full of the doctrine of fallen angels. See especially Matt. x. 1.—Ibid. xxv. 41.—Mark v. 8, 9.—John viii. 44.—2 Cor. xi. 14, 15.—James ii. 19.—2 Peter ii. 4.—1 John iii. 8.—Jude 6.

† Antiphanes, a very ancient poet, who lived near a hundred years before Socrates, hath strongly expressed his expectation of future existence: "Be not grieved," says he, "above measure for thy deceased friends. They are not dead, but have only finished that journey which it is necessary for every one of us to take. We ourselves must go to that great place of reception in which they

You must, therefore, to be consistent, and obtain composure in your irreligious courses, plunge headlong into the gulf of Atheism.*--But then, what will you do with reason and conscience, those troublesome inmates of the human bosom? Can you bring yourselves calmly to believe, that this beautiful frame of nature, which displays so much intelligence, wisdom, power, goodness, justice, art, design, is the work of chance? That admirable piece of mechanism your own body, are all assembled, and in this general rendezvous of mankind, live together in another state of being."—Spectator, No. 289.

* Books proper to be consulted against Atheism may be these that follow:—Nieuwentyt's Religious Philosopher—Adams's Lectures on Natural and Experimental Philosophy—Clarke's Discourse concerning the Being and Attributes of God—Baxter's Matho—Necker's Importance of Religious Opinions—Bishop Cumberland on the Laws of Nature—Bentley's Boyle's Lectures—Ray's Wisdom of God on the Works of Creation—Wollaston's Religion of Nature—Wesley's Survey of the Wisdom of God in the Creation—Derham's Physico and Astro-Theology—Cudworth's True Intellectual System—Bishop Wilkins on Natural Religion—Sturm's Reflections on the Works of God—Spectacle de la Nature, by Le Pluche—and Fenelon's Demonstration of the Existence, Wisdom, and Omnipotence of God; drawn from the knowledge of Nature, particularly of Man, and fitted to the meanest capacity.—This is a fine little work, and worthy of its great author. To these may be added also Swammerdam's Book of Nature.—Bonnet's Philosophical Researches, and Pierre's Studies of Nature, abound with much ingenious matter in proof of the Divine Existence. [*]

I transcribe the names of such a variety of authors both here, and on former pages, not out of any vain and foolish ostentation; but, to inform the less experienced reader, to what books he may have recourse, if he find it necessary for the peace and satisfaction of his own mind. But there is no proof of the existence of God, and the truth of Christianity, so consolatory, as the experimental and heartfelt knowledge of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ. Indeed, all other proofs, without this, are to little purpose, and this is independent of every other argument; for though it cannot with propriety be adduced for the conviction of unbelievers, it is calculated to yield more satisfaction to our own bosoms than the most laboured arguments that reach the understanding only. Poor people, whose minds have taken a religious turn, usually rest their salvation upon this experimental conviction alone.

[*] Great as are the evils that Paley has brought upon us, by teaching the clergy the art of prevarication, the christian world is certainly much indebted to him for his able treatises on the Evidences of Christianity and Natural Theology; which cannot be too warmly recommended.—*Editor.*

the meanest insect that crawls upon the ground, nay, the very watch in your pocket, will confute the supposition. You must, therefore, you see, come back to and embrace the religion of Jesus with us believers. You cannot find rest, upon the principles of sound reason, in any other system. For though the Gospel is attended with various and great difficulties, as every view of both the natural and moral world unquestionably is; yet it is attended with the fewest difficulties, and none but such as are honestly superable; and is, at the same time, the most comfortable and happy institution that ever was proposed to the consideration and acceptance of reasonable creatures. Nothing was ever so pure, so benevolent, so divine, so perfective of human nature, so adapted to the wants and circumstances of mankind. To live under the full power of it, is to have the proper enjoyment of life.* To believe and obey it, is to be entitled to a crown that fadeth not away.

Upon the supposition, that the person whom we call the Saviour of the world, had no commission from heaven to make the will of God known to mankind, would it not be one of the greatest of miracles, that he and his twelve followers, poor, unlettered, and obscure men, should have brought to light a system of doctrines the most sublime, and of morals the most perfect? that Jesus and the fishermen of Galilee should have far surpassed Socrates, Plato, Cicero, and all the greatest men of the most enlightened period of the world? that every thing they advanced should perfectly agree both with the natural, civil, and religious history of mankind? that their discourses should still be capable of improving and delighting the most learned and profound geniuses of the latter ages?† that all modern discoveries should

* "There is not a single precept in the Gospel, without excepting that which ordains the forgiveness of injuries, or that which commands every one *to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour*, which is not calculated to promote our happiness."

Sir Isaac Newton has given us a demonstration of the existence and intelligence of the Divine Being, in the close of his Principia, which the Atheistical reader would do well to consider at his leisure. And to the above books against Atheism should be added a very excellent and satisfactory Discourse by Archbishop Tillotson on the Wisdom of being Religious.

† Newton accounted the Scriptures the most sublime philosophy, and never mentioned the word—God—but with a pause.

bear witness to the truth of the facts recorded in the most venerable of all volumes? and that every book in the world, sacred or profane, Christian, Jewish, Pagan, or Mahometan, instead of lessening, should establish the credit and authority of the Bible as a revelation from heaven!*

See Bishop Watson's Two Sermons and Charge, p. 9, where this is asserted. The same thing is recorded of the Honourable Robert Boyle, by Bishop Burnet. How different the conduct of our Minute Philosophers?

* Mr. Whiston, in his *Astronomical Principles of Religion*, gives us a short view of the reasons, which induced him to believe the Jewish and Christian revelations to be true. These reasons are the following:

1. "The revealed religion of the Jews and Christians lays the law of nature for its foundation: and all along supports and assists natural religion; as every true revelation ought to do.

2. "Astronomy, and the rest of our certain mathematic sciences, do confirm the accounts of Scripture, so far as they are concerned.

3. "The most ancient and best historical accounts now known do, generally speaking, confirm the accounts of Scripture, so far as they are concerned.

4. "The more learning has encreased, the more certain, in general, do the Scripture accounts appear; and its difficult places are more cleared thereby.

5. "There are, or have been generally, standing memorials preserved of the certain truths of the principal historical facts, which were constant evidences of the certainty of them.

6. "Neither the Mosaical law, nor the Christian religion, could possibly have been received and established without such miracles as the sacred history contains.

7. "Although the Jews all along hated and persecuted the prophets of God; yet were they forced to believe they were true prophets, and their writings of divine inspiration.

8. "The ancient and present state of the Jewish nation are strong arguments for the truth of their law, and of the Scripture prophecies relating to them.

9. "The ancient and present state of the Christian church are also strong arguments for the truth of the Gospel, and of the Scripture prophecies relating thereto.

10. "The miracles whereon the Jewish and Christian religion are founded, were of old owned to be true by their very enemies.

11. "The sacred writers, who lived in times and places so remote from one another, do yet all carry on one and the same grand design; namely, that of the salvation of mankind, by the worship of, and obedience to, the one true God, in and through the king Messiah: which, without a divine conduct, could never have been done.

This is more extraordinary still, when it is considered that the object of our Saviour's religion is new, the doctrine new, his personal character new * and the religion itself

12. "The principal doctrines of the Jewish and Christian religion are agreeable to the most ancient traditions of all other nations.

13. "The difficulties relating to this religion are not such as affects the truth of the facts, but the conduct of Providence: the reasons of which the sacred writers never pretend fully to know, or to reveal to mankind.

14. "Natural religion which is yet so certain in itself, is not without such difficulties as to the conduct of Providence, as are objected to Revelation.

15. "The Sacred History has the greatest marks of truth, honesty, and impartiality of all other histories whatsoever: and withal has none of the known marks of knavery and imposture.

16. "The predictions of Scripture have been still fulfilled in the several ages of the world whereto they belong.

17. "No opposite systems of the universe, or schemes of divine revelation, have any tolerable pretences to be true, but those of the Jews and Christians.

"These are the plain and obvious arguments, which persuade me of the truth of the Jewish and Christian revelations, which I earnestly recommend to the farther consideration of the inquisitive reader."

* "The four Evangelists," of whom such contemptuous things have been spoken by Mr. Paine and others, "have done, without appearing to have intended it, what was never performed by any authors before or since. They have drawn a perfect human character without a single flaw! They have given the history of one, whose spirit, words, and actions, were in every particular what they ought to have been; who always did the very thing which was proper, and in the best manner imaginable; who never once deviated from the most consummate wisdom, purity, benevolence, compassion, meekness, humility, fortitude, patience, piety, zeal, and every other excellency; and who in no instance let one virtue or holy disposition entrench on another; but exercised them all in entire harmony and exact proportion! The more the histories of the Evangelists are examined, the clearer will this appear, and the more evidently will it be perceived, that they all coincide in the view they give of their Lord's character. This subject challenges investigation, and sets Infidelity at defiance! Either these four men exceeded in genius and capacity all the writers that ever lived, or they wrote under the special guidance of divine inspiration; for without labour of affection they have effected, what hath baffled all others, who have set themselves purposely to accomplish it.

"Industry, ingenuity, and malice have, for ages, been employed in endeavouring to prove the Evangelists inconsistent with each other: but not a single contradiction has been proved upon them."

This quotation is taken from the Rev. T. Scott's Answer to Paine's Age of Reason. The whole forms a satisfactory antidote

superior to all that was known among men. These are considerations which ought to have much weight with every

against the poison of that virulent Deist's publication, and may be had at the very moderate price of one shilling.

With this may be compared the fine account that Rousseau has given us of the Gospel, which is the more remarkable, as it is from the pen of an enemy.

"I will confess to you," says he, "that the majesty of the Scriptures strikes me with admiration, as the purity of the Gospel hath its influence on my heart. Peruse the works of our philosophers with all their pomp of diction: how mean, how contemptible are they, compared with the Scripture! Is it possible that a book, at once so simple and sublime, should be merely the work of man? Is it possible that the sacred personage, whose history it contains, should be himself a mere man? Do we find that he assumed the tone of an enthusiast or ambitious sectary? What sweetness, what purity in his manner? What an affecting gracefulness in his delivery? What sublimity in his maxims? What profound wisdom in his discourses! What presence of mind, what subtilty, what truth in his replies! How great the command over his passions! Where is the man, where the philosopher, who could so live, and so die, without weakness, and without ostentation? When Plato described his imaginary good man, loaded with all the shame of guilt, yet meriting the highest rewards of virtue, he describes exactly the character of Jesus Christ: the resemblance was so striking, that all the Fathers perceived it.

"What prepossession, what blindness must it be, to compare the son of Sophronicus to the son of Mary? What an infinite disproportion there is between them? Socrates, dying without pain or ignominy, easily supported his character to the last; and if his death, however easy, had not crowned his life, it might have been doubted whether Socrates, with all his wisdom, was any thing more than a vain sophist. He invented, it is said, the theory of morals. Others, however, had before put them in practice: he had only to say, therefore, what they had done, and to reduce their examples to precepts. Aristides had been just before Socrates defining justice; Leonidas had given up his life for his country before Socrates declared patriotism to be a duty; the Spartans were a sober people before Socrates recommended sobriety; before he had even defined virtue Greece abounded in virtuous men. But where could Jesus learn, among his competitors, that pure and sublime morality, of which he only hath given us both precept and example. The greatest wisdom was made known among the most bigoted fanaticism, and the simplicity of the most heroic virtues did honour to the vilest people upon earth. The death of Socrates, peaceably philosophizing with his friends, appears the most agreeable that could be wished for; that of Jesus expiring in the midst of agonizing pains, abused, insulted, and accused by a whole nation, is the most horrible that could be feared. Socrates in receiving the cup of poison, blessed indeed the weeping executioner who ad-

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man who calls himself a Philosopher, and wishes to be determined in his judgment only by the reason and nature of things.*

“But is it possible, any reasonable man should be so weak as to suppose the book, called the Bible, can be the Word of God?”

No intelligent Christian will distinguish it by that name, without a large restriction of its contents. All we assert respecting it, is, that it is a collection of writings containing a history of the divine dispensations to our world, and that the proper Word† of God, with numberless other particulars, is interwoven all the way through these most ancient and invaluable writings.

“Is it to be conceived by any man, who hath the least pretension to common sense, that the several simple relations recorded in the books of Moses, Joshua, Judges, and those which follow, can be founded in truth?”

ministered it; but Jesus, in the midst of excruciating tortures, prayed for his merciless tormentors. Yes, if the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God. Shall we suppose the evangelic history a mere fiction? Indeed, my friend, it bears not the marks of fiction; on the contrary, the history of Socrates, which nobody presumes to doubt, is not so well attested as that of Jesus Christ. Such a supposition, in fact, only shifts the difficulty without obviating it; it is more inconceivable that a number of persons should agree to write such a history, than that one only should furnish the subject of it. The Jewish authors were incapable of the diction, and strangers to the morality contained in the Gospel, the marks of whose truth are so striking and inimitable, that the inventor would be a more astonishing character than a hero.”—*Emilius*.

* It is truly remarkable, and highly satisfactory to the serious Christian, that all modern discoveries are so far from proving unfavourable to the truth of the Sacred Writings, that they strongly tend to the illustration and confirmation of them. All voyages and travels, into the East especially, are particularly useful in this point of view. Bruce's Travels throw light upon many biblical circumstances. Maurice's Indian Antiquities, and History of Hindostan, are singularly valuable. Harmer's Observations on divers passages of Scripture is a work superior to every thing of the kind, as it contains a selection, from a variety of voyages and travels, of such circumstances as have a tendency to illustrate the meaning of a large number of obscure passages in the Sacred Writings. [A new edition of this work is just published, with numerous additions, by Dr. Adam Clarke.]

† See this matter set in a very proper light in the fourth Letter of Bishop Watson's Apology for the Bible.

Most of our misapprehensions of this kind arose from not duly considering the infant state of the world, the progressive nature of civil society, and the different manners of the several ages and countries of the earth. The customs of the eastern nations, where the Bible was originally written, were then, and, indeed, are at this day, extremely different from our own, almost as much so as between the manners of the inhabitants of the South Sea islands, and those of this country. And while we are wondering at the simplicity of their customs, they are entertaining themselves with the novelty of ours.*

“But then, what occasion was there for a Mediator? Is not God the wise and good parent of all his creatures? and cannot he pardon our offences, and make us happy in the future state, without the interposition of any other being whatever?”

What God can do, what he hath done, and what he will do, are very different considerations. If it were equally consistent with his wisdom and goodness to save mankind without a Mediator, we may be assured it would have been done. But as the Divine Being hath thought proper to institute the mediatorial scheme, we may be assured there are the best reasons for the appointment; though we may be incapable of discovering, and even comprehending, what all those reasons are. Indeed, even in this state, few of the blessings of Providence are conveyed to us, except by the intervention of mediators. The whole plan of the world is carried forward

* This objection is well answered in the first Letter of Bishop Watson's Apology.

The character of Moses and his writings is very amply and satisfactorily vindicated from all the usual objections of infidels in the first of Bishop Newton's Dissertations on some parts of the Old Testament. Little more either need or can be added to what this learned man hath advanced. If the reader is disposed, he may add Gray's Key to the Old Testament. After reading such authors, it is scarcely possible to avoid entertaining an opinion extremely contemptible of Thomas Paine.

Mr. Hervey's Remarks on Lord Bolingbroke's Letters on the Study and Use of History, contain many pious and satisfactory observations on the History of the Old Testament, especially on the writings of Moses.

by the assistance of others. How many mediators must there be, before we can be supplied with our daily bread?*

"If a revelation must be made to mankind, why was it delivered in the historic form? Why was it not rather given in some set and regular composition, worthy of its author?"

The reason of this must be resolved into divine wisdom. He, that best knew the nature of man, chose this method in preference to every other; and there is no reason to question, but that the variety of compositions, of which the Bible is formed, is much better adapted to the circumstances of the great bulk of mankind, than any set and regular discourse in the didactic form.†

"The books of Moses, are thought by many to have been written some ages after his time?"‡

The authenticity of these books is unquestionable, and has been amply vindicated by men every way furnished for the enquiry.§

* See Soame Jenyng's *View of the internal Evidence of the Christian Religion*, and Butler's *Analogy*, passim, where the doctrine of the mediatorship of Messiah is considered at large, with unanswerable evidence.

† Let the reader consult Mr. Wakefield's *Evidence of Christianity*, where he will find a number of remarks well adapted to display the excellence, recommend the purity, illustrate the character, and evince the authenticity of the Christian religion. See too Cobbold's *Essay on the Historic form of Scripture*.

‡ Le Clerc was of this opinion in his younger days; but after more reading and a better informed judgment, he changed his mind, and wrote in defence of their genuineness and authenticity.

"The first, and truly original historians," says another learned man, "are those of the Hebrew Scriptures. The sacred writers, to the unequalled dignity of their subject, unite a majestic simplicity and perspicuity of stile and narration. Moses, the most ancient, is the most perfect of historians. His stile is copious, even, and clear. Like a deep river, he bears his reader with a calm and majestic course. It was his purpose, to give a body of laws, as well as a thread of history; and by interweaving them together, he has authenticated both: for it is impossible to forge the civil and religious policy of a great nation."

The ingenious reader will find much entertainment and instruction, and various difficulties obviated, in Bryant's *Observation on the Plagues of Egypt*.

§ See Prideaux's *Connexion*, b. 6; Kidder's *Commentary on the Books of Moses*; Witsii *Miscellanea Sacra*; Marsh's *Discourse on the Authenticity of those Books*, and Du Pin's *Bibliotheca*.

“Though some parts of the books of Moses are written with great beauty and simplicity; yet many of his laws are trifling, and unworthy of a great legislator?”

This objection arises from a want of due attention to the state of the people, for whom those laws were enacted. When the circumstances of the Jews are properly considered the Mosaic institutions will appear to be adapted with the most consummate propriety to those circumstances.* It is extremely hard that the Bible should be made accountable for our ignorance.

“The character and conduct of David, who is called a man after God’s own heart can never be defended by any person who has the least regard to truth and moral excellency?”

It is not the business of these papers to enter into a minute defence of all those parts of the Bible, which may seem objectionable. The character of David, however, stands high in our estimation, except in the case of Uriah; and as it has been virulently attacked by some considerable men, so it has been no less ably defended. And to such defence, we beg leave to refer those readers who find themselves concerned.†

* Consult Lowman’s Dissertation on the civil Government of the Hebrews, and Dr. Randolph’s Excellency of the Jewish Law vindicated. See too Forbes’s Thoughts on Religion.

† Delany’s Historical Account of the life and reign of David is valuable.—Bishop Porteus’s Sermon on the Character of David abounds with just remarks.—But Chandler’s Critical History of the life of David enters at large into the subject, and is particularly satisfactory. Another learned man says:—

“If we consider David, in the great variety of his fine qualifications; the ornaments of his person, and the far more illustrious endowments of his mind; the surprising revolutions in his fortune; sometimes reduced to the lowest ebb of adversity; sometimes riding upon the highest tide of prosperity;—his singular dexterity in extricating himself from difficulties, and peculiar felicity in accommodating himself to all circumstances;—the prizes he won, as a youthful champion; and the victories he gained, as an experienced general; his masterly hand upon the harp, and his inimitable talent for poetry;—the admirable regulations of his royal government, and the incomparable usefulness of his public writings;—the depth of his repentance, and the height of his devotion;—the vigour of his faith in the divine promises, and the ardour of his love to the divine Majesty:—If we consider these, with several other marks of honour and grace, which ennoble the history of his life; we

“The characters and manners of the ancient Prophets were uncouth, and unworthy of the God who is said to have sent them?”

In general, they were moral and religious men; and their manners were in perfect conformity to the times in which they lived, and the people among whom they conversed. Besides, it is not essential to the character of a prophet of the true God, that he should be a good man. Balaam is an instance to the contrary. God, indeed, in the course of his providence, frequently uses bad men as instruments to accomplish his own purposes.

“But there are many actions ascribed to the servants of God in the Old Testament, which very much wound the feelings of every good man. Noah was guilty of intoxication; Abraham of dissimulation; Jacob of lying; Aaron of idolatry; Jael of treachery and murder; David of adultery and murder; Solomon of idolatry and lewdness; and many others of crimes of several kinds?”

The relation of all these instances of wickedness in the servants of God, is a proof of the disinterestedness and impartiality of the sacred historians; and these crimes are recorded, not for our imitation, but for our admonition. If we attend to the consequences of these several transgressions, we shall see no good reason to imitate them. It is not any where recorded, that these faulty parts of their conduct met with the approbation of Heaven.

“How may the horrible destruction of the nations of Canaan be reconciled with the principles of mercy and goodness?”

Just as pestilence, famine, storms, tempests and earthquakes may be reconciled with those lovely perfections. The Moral Governor of the world is at liberty to destroy offending nations and individuals, in any manner he judges meet.* We see this to be the constant course of Divine Providence.

shall see such an assemblage of shining qualities, as perhaps were never united in any other merely human character.”

* See this vindicated in Bryant's Treatise on the Scriptures; in the first Letter of Watson's Apology; and in almost every other author who has treated upon subjects of this nature.

“But, you should like to have been eye-witnesses of the mighty works wrought by Moses* and Jesus Christ?”

So should we. Has not every man, in every age, and in every country under heaven, the same right to expect this intelligence? Miracles must, therefore, be wrought at all times, in all places, and before every individual of mankind. And what would be the consequence? Miracles would cease to be miracles, and the whole course of nature would be thrown into confusion and disorder. So unreasonable are the demands of wayward men!

“Many parts of the Old Testament are extremely dull, uninteresting, and even unintelligible?”

* The writings of Moses have received much confirmation and elucidation from the learned labours of the late Sir William Jones, and the present Mr. Maurice. All the leading circumstances of the Mosaic history are found detailed, with various degrees of corruption and perversion among the writings of the East Indies. The following account of Noah and his three sons, from Mr. Maurice's Sanscreeet Fragments, is very remarkable, and strongly corroborative of Mosaic history.

1. “To Satyavarman that sovereign of the whole earth, were born three sons, the eldest Sherma; then Charma; and thirdly, Jyapeti, by name.

2. They were all men of good morals, excellent in virtue and virtuous deeds, skilled in the use of weapons to strike with or to be thrown; brave men, eager for victory in battle.

3. But Satyavarman, being continually delighted with devout meditation, and seeing his sons fit for dominion, laid upon them the burden of government.

4. Whilst he remained honouring and satisfying the gods, and priests, and kine, one day, by the act of destiny, the king, having drunk mead,

5. Became senseless, and lay asleep naked. Then was he seen by Charma, and by him were his two brothers called:

6. To whom he said, What has now befallen? In what state is this our sire? By those two was he hidden with clothes, and called to his senses again and again.

7. Having recovered his intellect, and perfectly knowing what had passed, he cursed Charma; saying; Thou shalt be servant of servants;

8. And, since thou wast a laughter in their presence, from laughter shalt thou acquire a name. Then he gave to Sherma the wide domain on the south of the snowy mountains.

9. And to Jyapeti he gave all on the north of the snowy mountains; but he, by the power of religious contemplation, attained supreme bliss.”

Asiatic Researches, vol. iii. p. 467, and Mr. Maurice's Sanscreeet Fragments, p. 44.

Considering the ages in which it was written; the different manners which prevailed; the frequency of allusions to ancient customs and circumstances no longer known; considering too that we generally read it in one of the most literal of all translations; and that many hundreds of places are really inaccurately translated; it is truly wonderful that it should be so intelligible as it is, and appear to so much advantage. Most of our objections to those admirable writings are founded in our own ignorance.* Before we set up to be critics upon the Bible, let us make ourselves thorough masters of the three languages in which it is written, and of the customs which prevailed in those countries, and in those ages when it was written. An avowed Infidel, with these qualifications, I believe, is not this day to be found in England. No person of a serious cast of mind, of pure morals and a competent share of learning, can be an Infidel. Shew us the man of this description, who professedly rejects the divine mission of Jesus Christ, and we shall think the cause of Infidelity less desperate.

“But are there not many contradictions, absurdities, and falsehoods in the books of the New Testament, such as no man can reconcile?”

We deny that there is either contradiction, absurdity, or falsehood, in this inestimable volume.† There are we grant,

* It is no inconsiderable proof of the truth of some of the historical books of the Old Testament, that the ten tribes of Israel, which were carried captive by Shalmanezzer, king of Assyria, upwards of 2500 years ago, and which had been supposed to be lost and swallowed up among the nations through which they were scattered, are now found to exist as a distinct people, in the eastern parts of the world, under the name of Afghans. Their traditions are little more than a mutilated and perverted history of the ancient Jews. See the second volume of the Asiatic researches for a fuller account of these people.

† “Holy Scriptures are an adorable mixture of clearness and obscurity, which enlighten and humble the children of God, and blind and harden those of this world. The light proceeds from God and blindness from the creature.”

This is an observation of that admirable Divine, Dr. Wilson, late Bishop of Sodor and Man, whose works contain a rich magazine of pious and useful observations. If all our Bishops and Clergy had lived, and preached, and wrote in the spirit of this good man, there would have been few infidels this day in England.—Bishop Wilson, though entitled to the honour, always declined sitting in the House of Lords, saying, “That the Church should

certain apparent blemishes of these kinds, but not even one that is real. Learned men have vindicated it from these charges with all reasonable evidence. Can we suppose that such a man as Locke would have said, that "it is all pure, all sincere; nothing too much, nothing wanting," if such charges could be made good against it? But supposing the New Testament did abound with both contradictions, absurdities, and falsehoods, this circumstance, though less honourable in itself, would by no means render null the divine mission of Jesus Christ. He might be the true Messiah notwithstanding. Impartial men should weigh this well, before they make the real or supposed blemishes of Scripture a ground of their rejecting the Saviour of the world.

"Why was so severe a penalty as everlasting* punishment denounced against sin in the Gospel? This seems hard, and, indeed, inconsistent with the goodness and mercy of the Divine Being?"

Guilty man is an improper judge in this matter. Infinite wisdom hath been good to denounce such punishment against incorrigible transgressors, and, therefore, we may be well assured, it is consistent with infinite goodness and mercy. If the denunciation of eternal torments will not restrain men from sin, much less would a shorter duration have done it.

have nothing to do with the State. Christ's kingdom is not of this world." See his Works, vol. 1. p. 34, quarto edit.

The public is greatly indebted to the late Archbishop Newcome, an Irish Prelate, for his learned labours on biblical subjects. This sound scholar declares his opinion to be, that "every genuine proposition in Scripture, whether doctrinal or historical, contains a truth when it is rightly understood; and that all real difficulties in the Gospels will, at length, yield to the efforts of rational criticism.

See his Harmony.

Though Dr. Mill has enumerated more than 30,000 variations in the manuscripts and versions of the New Testament, it is very remarkable, and highly satisfactory, that they do not when all put together affect any thing essential, either in the doctrines or precepts of the Gospel.

* In the 35th of Archbishop Tillotson's Sermons every thing is said upon the eternity of the torments of hell that can be known with any certainty. It is a discourse well worth the serious attention of the reader, especially in the present time of relaxed divinity, and more relaxed morality.

Some very considerable men, among whom may be reckoned the late Bishop Newton and Dr. David Hartley, have been of opinion,

"The Gospel of Christ bears too hard upon the pleasures of mankind, and lays us under too severe restraints?"

Does it then rob us of any pleasures worthy the rational nature? It restrains us indeed, but it only restrains us from things that would do us harm, and make us and our fellow creatures miserable. It admits of every rational, manly, benevolent and humane pleasure. Nay, it allows every sensual enjoyment that is consistent with the real good, and true happiness, of the whole compound nature of man. It enjoins every thing that can do us good, and it prohibits every thing that will do us harm, under penalties of the most alarming kind. Could a Being of infinite benevolence and perfection do better, or act otherwise, consistently with those perfections?

"How can we at this distance of time know, that the writings contained in the Bible are genuine? May they not have been corrupted, and many additions made to them by designing men in after ages?"*

that eternal punishment, properly so called, is no where denounced in Scripture. If so, the objection is of no force in any point of view. Consult *Scarlet's New Testament on Universal Restitution*. We may be assured, however, in every event of things, the Judge of all the earth will do right.

* There are several circumstances, as we have already, in part, observed, still in existence strongly corroborative of the truth of the Bible. The Mosaic history of the creation is confirmed by the present appearance of things; Noah's flood by a variety of natural phenomena, and the general history of the world: The destruction of Sodom, by the face of the country around, and the ruins which have been discovered; the passage of the Israelites through the wilderness, by the rock that supplied them with water, which is still in existence, and visible to the curious enquirer, besides the names of places, and the traditions of the present inhabitants: the history and prophecies concerning Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, Egypt, Jerusalem, and other cities and countries, are all confirmed by the present state of those places and countries: the birth and resurrection of Christ are established by the existing circumstances of the Christian church: and it is remarkable, that the cleft in the rock, which is said to have been made by the earthquake at the crucifixion of Christ, is still visible, and bears witness to the preternatural concussion. Let the curious reader consult *Shaw and Maundrell's Travels*, together with *Bryant's Dissertation on the Divine Mission of Moses*, and his observations on the place of residence given to the children of Israel in Egypt, and their departure from it, for several of the above particulars.

Never were any writings conveyed down with so good evidence of their being genuine as these. Upon their first publication, the books of the New Testament, in particular, were put into all hands, scattered into all nations, translated into various languages. They have been quoted by innumerable authors, appealed to by all parties of Christians, and made the standard of truth in every question of moment. We can trace them back through every age to the period in which they were written. And extremely remarkable and consolatory is the consideration, that notwithstanding the innumerable times they have been copied, and the various errors, sects, and parties which have arisen, the corruptions which have prevailed in the church, and the revolutions and convulsion which have taken place among the nations, the Bible has continued fundamentally the same; insomuch that from the very worst copy or translation in the world, we may easily learn the genuine doctrines of Christianity. The divisions and squabbles of men have been wonderfully overruled to the establishment of God's truth. The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

"But, notwithstanding all the boasted advantages of the Gospel, are not many who profess to believe in Christ, and who attend the ordinances of religion, the arrantest knaves upon earth?"

Granted. Do you, therefore, infer that the Gospel itself is an imposture? This argument is good for nothing. It

Noah's ark is found, by the most accurate observations of modern geometricians, to have been contrived after the very best form for the purposes for which it was intended; and its dimensions perfectly well suited to receive the burden designed for it. It has been calculated to contain upwards of 72,000 tons burden.

Consult Doddridge's Lectures for Heathen Testimonies to the facts of the Old Testament.

* See Lardner's Credibility passim; Simpson's Essay on the Authenticity of the New Testament, where the evidence is brought into one short view; and Lord Haile's Disquisitions concerning the Antiquities of the Christian Church.

The celebrated Philosopher, Bonnet, of Geneva, assures us after a very serious and accurate examination of the subject, that there is no ancient history "so well attested, as that of the Messenger of the Gospel; that there are no historical facts supported by so great a number of proofs; by such striking, solid, and various proofs, as are those facts on which the religion of Jesus Christ is founded."

proves too much. Some professors of natural religion are bad men: therefore natural religion is an imposture; there is no God. Some great pretenders to Philosophy are knaves; therefore Philosophy is all imposition upon mankind. Some deists are immoral men; therefore the principles of Deism are founded in error and delusion. Was it ever known that any man grew more moral, pious, virtuous and heavenly minded, after rejecting the Gospel? I could produce you a thousand instances where men have become better by cordially embracing it; and we may defy you to produce one instance where any man became worse.

"Can any man, of an enlightened and liberal mind, embrace the mysterious doctrines of Christianity? What must such an one think of the Trinity the Atonement, the Incarnation, and those other unaccountable peculiarities of that institution, which have been a stumbling block to many persons in every age of the church?"*

And are there not also many strange and unaccountable things in the book of nature, and in the administration of Divine Providence, the design and use of which we cannot see?† Nay, are there not even some things which to us seem

* Consult Simpson's Apology for the Doctrine of the Trinity, on this objection, where the subject is treated at large.

It appears to me indubitable, that all the real doctrines of religion, as contained, not in this or the other human institution, but in the New Testament, are defensible on the purest principles of reason, without sacrificing any one of its mysterious doctrines. There is no need that we should carry our candour and complaisance so far, to gain the approbation of any man, or set of men whatever.

The mysterious doctrines of religion have caused some sceptical men to reject those scriptures in which they are contained; others have explained and refined them away. So, because the doctrines of religion have been abused to superstition and folly, abundance of our fellow creatures, without due consideration, are disposed to cast off all religions whatever. Ill judging men! What is human nature, without religion? How horrible the state of the world without religion? Let Cicero speak its importance to human happiness: *Religione sublata, perturbatio vitæ sequitur, et magna confusio. Atque haud scio, an pietate adversus Deos sublata, fides etiam societas humani generis, et una excellentissima virtus, justitia, tollatur.* De Nat. Deo. 1, 2.

How strongly has this been exemplified in the state of France for some years!

† What if there should be some incomprehensible doctrines in the Christian religion; some circumstances, which in their causes, or their consequences, pass the reach of human reason; are they to

wrong and ill contrived? Yet we own the world was created by God, and that he is the Governour thereof. And why then

be rejected upon that account?—"Weigh the matter fairly; and consider whether Revealed Religion be not, in this respect, just upon the same footing, with every other object of your contemplation. Even in mathematics, the science of demonstration itself, though you get over its first principles, and learn to digest the idea of a point without parts, a line without breadth, and a surface without thickness, yet you will find yourselves at a loss to comprehend the perpetual approximation of lines, which can never meet; the doctrine of incommensurables, and of an infinity of infinities, each infinitely greater, or infinitely less, not only than any finite quantity, but than each other. In physics, you cannot comprehend the primary cause of any thing; nor of the light, by which you see; nor of the elasticity of the air, by which you hear; nor of the fire, by which you are warmed. In physiology, you cannot tell, what first gave motion to the heart; nor what continues it; nor why its motion is less voluntary, than that of the lungs: nor why you are able to move your arm, to the right or left, by a simple volition; you cannot explain the cause of animal heat; nor comprehend the principle, by which your body was at first formed, nor by which it is sustained, nor by which it will be reduced to earth. In natrual religion, you cannot comprehend the eternity or onnipresence of the Deity; nor easily understand, how his prescience can be consistent with your freedom, or his immutability with his government of moral agents; nor why he did not make all his creatures equally perfect; nor why he did not create them sooner; in short, you cannot look into any branch of knowledge, but you meet with subjects above your comprehension. The fall and the redemption of human kind are not more incomprehensible, than the creation and the conservation of the universe; the infinite Author of the works of providence, and of nature, is equally inscrutable, equally past our finding out in them both. And it is somewhat remarkable, that the deepest inquirers into nature, have ever thought with most reverence, and spoken with most diffidence concerning those things which, in revealed religion, may seem hard to be understood; they have ever avoided the self-sufficiency of knowledge, which springs from ignorance, produces indifference, and ends in Infidelity.

"Plato mentions a set of men, who were very ignorant, and thought themselves extremely wise; and who rejected the argument for the being of a God, derived from the harmony and order of the universe, as old and trite. There have been men, it seems, in all ages, who in affecting singularity, have overlooked truth: an argument, however, is not the worse for being old; and surely it would have been a more just mode of reasoning, if you had examined the external evidence for the truth of Christianity, weighed the old arguments from miracles, and from prophecies, before you had rejected the whole account, from the difficulties you met with in it. You would laugh at an Indian, who in peeping into a history of

shall we not allow that the Scriptures may be from God, notwithstanding these difficulties and seeming incongruities? Indeed, a revelation, which we could fully comprehend, would not appear the production of an infinite mind: it would bear no resemblance to its heavenly author; and therefore we should have reason to suspect it spurious. It is extremely probable, that the three grand volumes of nature, providence, and grace, should all, in some respect or other, bear the stamp of their being derived from one source. Many things in the volumes

England, and meeting with the mention of the Thames being frozen, or of a shower of hail, or of snow, should throw the book aside, as unworthy of his further notice, from his want of ability to comprehend these phænomena.”—Bishop Watson’s *Apology for Christianity*.

The observations of this learned prelate, in his *Apology for the Bible*, are equally striking, p. 115.

“You are lavish in your praise of deism: it is so much better than atheism, that I mean not to say any thing to its discredit; it is not however without its difficulties. What think you of an uncaused cause of every thing? Of a being who has no relation to time, not being older to-day than he was yesterday, nor younger to-day than he will be to-morrow? who has no relation to space, not being a part here, a part there, or a whole any where? What think you of an omniscient being who cannot know the future actions of a man? or if his omniscience enables him to know them, what think you of the contingency of human actions? And if human actions are not contingent, what think you of the morality of actions, of the distinction between vice and virtue, crime and innocence, sin and duty? What think you of the infinite goodness of a being who existed through eternity, without any emanation of his goodness, manifested in the creation of sensitive beings? Or, if you contend that there has been an eternal creation, what think you of an effect coæval with its cause, of matter not posterior to its Maker? What think you of the existence of evil, moral and natural, in the work of an infinite being, powerful, wise, and good? What think you of the gift of freedom of will, when the abuse of freedom becomes the cause of general misery? I could propose to your consideration a great many other questions of a similar tendency, the contemplation of which has driven not a few from deism to atheism, just as the difficulties in revealed religion have driven yourself, and some others, from christianity to deism. For my own part, I can see no reason why either revealed or natural religion should be abandoned, on account of the difficulties which attend either of them. I look up to the incomprehensible Maker of Heaven and earth with unspeakable admiration, and self-annihilation, and am a deist.—I contemplate, with the utmost gratitude and humility of mind, his unsearchable wisdom and goodness in the redemption of the world from eternal death, through the intervention of his Son Jesus Christ, and am a christian.”—*Editor*.

of nature and providence far exceed our highest powers to comprehend;* it is not improbable, therefore, that the volume of divine grace should be under a similar predicament. What doth the wisest man upon earth know of the nature of God, but what the Scripture hath told him? Extremely little. It may be questioned whether we should have known any thing of him, had it not been for some original revelation.

“If Christ was so necessary to the salvation of the world, why was he sent no sooner? Why, even according to your own account, were four thousand years suffered to elapse, before the Sun of righteousness arose?”

Very sufficient reasons may be given, and have a hundred times been given, for this wise delay. It may, however, be retorted, if philosophy be medicinal to a foolish world, why were Thales, Solon, Pythagoras, Aristotle, Zeno, Antoninus, Seneca, and other ancient heathens, born no sooner, but men suffered to continue so many ages in profound ignorance little superior to the beasts that perish? Answer this with respect to them, and you are answered with respect to the Messiah. I add, moreover, Christ was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. The efficacy of his death extends from the beginning to the end of time. He is an universal Saviour. When we any of us bestow a favour upon a fellow-creature, we alone are to determine the time and circumstances of doing that favour.

“If the Gospel, and our natural passions,† both come from one source, why doth the former oppose the latter?”

It is well known, that while the inferior powers of human nature assume dominion over the superior, no man can be happy. The intention of the Gospel is, therefore, not to de-

* The dispensations of Divine Providence are ably vindicated from the objections of Sceptics and Infidels by Dr. Sherlock, in his valuable Treatise on that subject. The reader will also find a very pleasing paper in the Spectator to the same purport, which he would do well to consult. It is No. 237, in the third volume.

† See a most remarkable deliverance from the dominion of indulged and long continued lust, in the case of Col. Gardiner, sect. 37, 38, of his Life by Dr. Doddridge. Every man, who is living under the tyrannical dominion of his lusts, and wishes to obtain deliverance, should not fail to consult this extraordinary emancipation. Nothing is too hard for divine grace to accomplish.

stroy the affections of men but to regulate and restore them to due order and harmony and so to promote the felicity of human life. And wherever it hath its proper, full, and natural effect, there it always forms a virtuous, respectable and happy character. The grand intention of it, however, is to train mankind for glory and immortality in a future state of existence.

“If the human race are all sprung from one original pair, and if the several species of animals, insects, and birds, were produced in the garden of Eden, as the Bible seems to insinuate, how is it possible they should be found dispersed into the several countries of the world at an immense distance, and, in many cases separated by extensive oceans?”*

If we refuse to believe in God, till we understand all the difficulties attending his existence, and in Jesus Christ, till we are acquainted with all the mysteries of Providence and Grace, we must continue, not only unbelievers, but Atheists to eternity. How often must it be repeated, that our comprehension is not the standard of truth? The evidence for the genuineness and authenticity of the Sacred Records must be the measure of our faith.

“Is it at all probable, that we, and the several kinds of black men, should be sprung from the same parents, as the Bible affirms, all human creatures were?”

At first view, this is a considerable difficulty, but has been accounted for upon principles perfectly satisfactory, which we cannot stop here at length to detail,†

“Why is the Gospel attended with so many difficulties? and why did not infinite wisdom if infinite wisdom had any concern in the business, take care to make every thing plain and easy to the meanest capacity.”‡

* See Stackhouse on this difficulty.

† Consult Mr. Bryant's Treatise on the Christian Religion, p. 267—277. See the same work too for answers to several other objections. But for a solution of the greatst number of difficulties, I repeat again, turn to Stackhouse's large work on the Bible.

‡ The religion of Jesus Christ, any more than the dispensation of Moses, was never intended to be free from difficulties. It was rather designed to be a touchstone for ingenuous and curable dispositions. If we are honest enquirers after saving truth, and

It is answered, with triumphant gratitude, every thing necessary to salvation is plain and easy to the most common apprehension, if we are humbly disposed to submit our wills and understandings to the will and understanding of God. And if there are some things in the sacred writings and in the scheme of redemption, difficult to comprehend, it is not less so in the course of nature, and in the principles of unrevealed religion. But if the Gospel of Christ were attended with abundantly more difficulties than it is, still there could be no solid objection against substantial proof. A poor illiterate man, in a dark corner of the earth, has preached a scheme of doctrines and morals superior to all human wisdom, and calculated to make all mankind happy, if all mankind would submit to its authority. This he hath spread abroad to the ends of the world, in opposition to all the powers of earth and hell. Let any man account for this phenomenon, on principles merely human, if he can.

“Has not the Gospel been the cause of the greatest misery and destruction to the human race, upon various occasions, almost ever since it was introduced?”

It has. And this is among the proofs that it came from above. The Author of it predicted that so it should be. But the Gospel itself was no otherwise the cause of misery and destruction to the human race, than as Philosophy has been the cause of misery and destruction to the inhabitants of France. As in the latter case, it was not Philosophy. but the abuse of it, which has done so much mischief; so in the former, it was not the Gospel, but a most wicked perversion of its pure and benevolent doctrines, which has produced so much havock among mankind.* And though it has not done all the good

persevere in our pursuit, we shall not be disappointed. What we know not to-day, we shall know to-morrow. That is a fine anecdote which is given us by Jacob Bryant, Esq. in the above Treatise on the Christian Religion, concerning the Queen and the Princess Mary. See that Work, and Simpson’s Essay on the New Testament, p. 123.

* See this difficulty answered in Bonnet’s Interesting Views of Christianity, p. 230—237, and still more fully in the first vol. of Bishop Porteus’s Sermons, Discourse the twelfth.

The Roman Emperors of the three first centuries after the birth of Christ, are somewhere said by St. Jerome, if I remember right, to have martyred 5000 Christians a day every day in the year, except one; that is, they put to death at different times, during those centuries, 1,820,000 souls!—These Heathens, however, ac-

that might have been desired or expected, yet it has already accomplished great things for the world. To the Bible we owe all the best laws in our best civil institutions. To the Bible, Europe is indebted for much of the liberty which it now enjoys; and, little as we may think of it, the Bible too was the mean of preserving the small share of learning which was cultivated during the dark ages.* We may close these observations in the words of that great French writer, Montesquieu—"To assert that religion was no restraining power, because it does not always restrain, is to assert, that civil laws have likewise no restraining power. He reasons falsely against religion, who enumerates at great length the evils which it has produced, and overlooks the advantages. Were I to recount all the evils which civil laws, monarchical and republican governments have produced in the world, I might exhibit a dreadful picture.—Let us set before our eyes the continual massacres of Greek and Roman kings and generals on the one hand, and on the other the destruction of cities and nations by those very kings and generals; a Timur and a Jencizkan ravaging Asia; and we shall see, that we owe to religion a certain political law in government, and in war a certain law of nations; advantages which human nature cannot sufficiently acknowledge."†

"If the Gospel be such a blessing to mankind, why, in these ages, has it not been published in every nation?"

It is answer sufficient, that God giveth account of none of his matters, and every man shall be judged according to the privileges he hath enjoyed, and not according to those

cording to this calculation, were not half so bloody as the Roman Catholic Christians have been.—The infidel Philosophers of France, who are evermore charging the Gospel with cruelty and murder, though it prohibits every thing of the kind under the most awful sanction, by a most tremendous retaliation, have turned their arms one against another, and have murdered upwards of two millions of their own countrymen in the course of seven years! Hence it appears, that your vain glorious Philosophers have been, and are now, at least as bloody, illiberal, and intolerant as the most bloody, illiberal, and intolerant of us Parsons! What has the rejection of Christianity, and the introduction of Philosophy done for that enslaved, yet triumphant country?

* See this proved by Jortin, vol. 7. p. 353—377.

† Spirit of Laws, book 24. ch. 2, 3.

with which he has not been favoured. No nation hath any right to the blessing. God is a sovereign, and may dispense his favours as his own wisdom shall direct. Moreover, all the nations of the earth shall be blessed with it in the due course of Divine Providence.

“Jesus shall reign where’er the sun
Does his successive journeys run;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till suns shall wax and wane no more.”*

“But if God was the original author of the Jewish and Christian dispensations, why were they permitted to contract such a mass of ceremonial corruptions?”

The fault lay not in either of the institutions, but in the low and superstitious state of human nature. The institutions were good, but the folly of men hath perverted them to unworthy purposes. Is the fountain to be blamed, because the streams have been polluted by the feet of men?

“Be it so; but why was man created in so low and degraded a state? or rather, why was he permitted, by the benevolent and all powerful Creator, to sink down into such an idolatrous and superstitious condition?”

This is a difficulty, be it observed, which affects natural as well as revealed religion, Deism as well as Christianity. There is no end to questions of this nature. With equal propriety may we ask why man was not created an angel, a seraph, a God?

“Presumptuous Man! the reason wouldst thou find,
Why form’d so weak, so little, and so blind?
First, if thou canst, the harder reason guess,
Why formed no weaker, blinder, and no less.”

Can you say that Thomas Paine† has not brought many very heavy charges against the writings both of the Old and New Testaments, and such as cannot easily be answered?”

* The reader may consult the 90th section of Simpson’s Key to the Prophecies, for a concise view of the millennial reign of Christ.

† Paine’s book against the Bible can never stagger the faith of any man, who is well informed upon the subject of religion; yet they will have great effect upon all our immoral and lukewarm professors of the Gospel. But where is the difference between a wicked

We grant this objection in all its force. He is a man of shrewd abilities, and has a method of setting difficulties in a strong point of view. But, if you yourself are a person of any discernment, you cannot help seeing, that he discovers great pride of understanding, much rancour and malignity of heart, and most invincible ignorance of the subject upon which he writes. His intention in his *Rights of Man* was plainly to subvert, as far as in him lay, the civil government of this country; and, in his *Age of Reason*, he meant no other than to convert the common people of England to a state of infidelity, and so to overturn the religious government of the country; and, in both, he evidently meant no other than to involve us as a nation in civil and religious destruction. To men of sense, moderation, and information, there is no danger, either from his political or religious efforts; but there is danger to every reader of his writings, who is not possessed of these qualifications. Bishop Watson's *Apology* may perfectly satisfy any man that Thomas Paine is by no means qualified to write against the Bible. Any fool, indeed, may sneer, revile, abuse, and ridicule, the most valuable objects in nature. The late atheistical king of Prussia has had the impudence to treat the Deity himself in this manner. But what shall be the end of them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ?

If the audacity of this scurrilous Infidel were not equal to his ignorance, he never would have attacked the Clergy

Infidel and a wicked Christian? Immoral men are incapable of happiness under any dispensation of religion whatever. They must be changed or perish. And it is of little consequence whether a man goes to hell as a Deist or a Christian; only, it is presumed, the lost Christian will perish under greater aggravations.

A letter now lies before me, which I this day, July 20th, 1798, received from a Correspondent, who was intimately acquainted with Thomas Paine before he went to France, and in whose house he spent pretty much of his time, which assures me, "that Mr. Paine, notwithstanding his superior powers of natural reason, was a prey to chagrin, and apparent disappointment—that he was never at rest in his mind, but truly like the troubled sea, throwing up mire and filth."—This gentleman further adds—and I have seen the same information in the public prints—"I now understand that Mr. Paine is lost to all sense of decency in Paris, being intoxicated from morning till night."

on the score of literature, as he does, when he insinuates they are acquainted with little more than *a b ab, e b eb, and hic, hæc, hoc*. Where does he find, in any period or country of the world, men of more deep, various, and extensive learning than are large numbers of the Clergy, among the several denominations of Christians? Abundance of names are to be found, with whom he is no more fit to be compared, than a dwarf with a giant. One does not wonder, indeed, to hear him explode an acquaintance with languages when, according to his own confession, he is a stranger to all but the English. To see such an ignoramus prate about the science of astronomy, and the properties of triangles is enough to sicken any man, who has even a smattering of knowledge. Let this empty and vain glorious boaster call to mind a small number even of Priests, who have been an honour to human nature in point of mathematical, philosophical, and literary attainments, at least;—and then let him blush, if he is capable of blushing, at his own vile perversions of Scripture, and misrepresentations of the characters of the friends of religion. Whatever faults some of the Clergy may have been guilty of, or whatever defects there may be in the ecclesiastical constitution of this, or any other country, a large number of clerical names will be handed down with honour, as the benefactors of mankind, while his shall be damned to fame, as a base calumniator of the Sacred Writings, and the characters of men much better than himself. What shall we say, when such scholars as Barrow, Cudworth, Wilkins, Pearson, Derham, Flamsteed, Hales, Bentley, Bochart, Desaguliers, Mede, Baxter, Chillingworth, Clarke, Berkley, Butler, Warburton, Watts, Doddridge, Lowman, Jortin, Lardner, Witherspoon, Robertson, and a thousand others, both living and dead, are involved in the censure of this scurrilous Sciolist?—It is true, the church has had a very long and dark eclipse. Priests have been highly to blame on many occasions. But no age can be produced when they have not been, at least, as learned and religious as any other body of men. There was a time, indeed, when Vigilius was condemned to be burnt for asserting the existence of the Antipodes; and, even so late as the beginning of the seventeenth century, Gallileo, who discovered and introduced the use of telescopes, instead of being rewarded for his pains, was

imprisoned, and compelled to renounce his opinions resulting from such discoveries, as damnable heresies. These are lamentable facts, and the Priests, concerned in the persecution, deserved to be hanged. But I will take upon me to aver, that even in this enlightened, literary, and philosophical age, at the very close of the eighteenth century, Thomas Paine himself hath submitted to the view of the world a number of as palpable instances of ignorance, or maliciousness, or both, as ever an insulted public was cursed with in any one person, who pretended to write for the improvement of mankind.—The Age of Reason, as applied to this vain man's pamphlets, is a burlesque; it is an insult upon common sense; it ought rather to be called, The Age of Falsehood—The Age of Infidelity—The Age of Ignorance—The Age of Calumny—The Age of Manianism—or, in short, The Age of any thing, but that of Reason.

I will give the reader a few specimens, and leave him to judge.

1. Mr. Paine alledges, that Moses could not be the author of the five books, which go under his name, because they are frequently written in the third person.

Xenophon and Cæsar will answer this difficulty.

2. Mr. Paine confounds mathematical with historical evidence.

Any novice in science, however, knows the difference.

3. Mr. Paine confounds also a book that is genuine with one that is authentic.

He ought to have known that the difference is extremely great and important.

4. He declares that the prodigies recorded by Livy and Tacitus are attended with as good evidence as the miracles of Christ.

No man of any information can justify such an assertion.

5. He asserts, that miracles admit not of proof.

Let the reader turn to Campbell on the subject and judge. The testimony of 500, or 50, or even 10 credible persons is sufficient to establish the validity of any of the scriptural miracles, where there is no counter evidence.

6. Mr. Paine assures us, there is no affirmative evidence that Moses is the author of the Pentateuch.

No books in the world ever had more affirmative evidence. Bishop Watson has brought it into one view.—Abundance

of the most respectable authors, who have written since the time of Moses, give their testimony to his writings. The books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, and most of those which follow, all bear witness to them, besides several of the heathen.

7. He asserts, that the genealogy from Adam to Saul takes up the first nine chapters of the first book of Chronicles.

Now any man may see, that the descendants of David to four generations after Zerubbabel are found in the third chapter; and the succession of the high priests till the captivity, in the sixth chapter, with various other similar matters.

8. Mr. Paine considers the books of Chronicles as a repetition of the two books of Kings.

It is easy to be convinced, however, that this is a very erroneous representation.—The first book of Kings contains an account of the old age and death of David, with the succession and reign of Solomon; the history of Rehoboam, and division of the kingdom; Jeroboam's reign, and several of his successors in the kingdom of Israel till the death of Ahab. It contains, moreover, some account of Asa, Jehosaphat, and other kings of Judah, so far as connected with the contemporary kings of Israel. The history of Elijah is also interwoven in the same book pretty much at length, with some notice of Elisha.

The second book of Kings finishes the history of Elijah, and carries forward the history of Elisha to some extent, with a kind of joint history of the kings of Israel and Judah, and those with whom they had war, till the captivity of the king of Israel by Shalmaneser, and of the king of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar.

Let us now examine the contents of the two books of Chronicles.

The first book contains the genealogies before mentioned, and the history of David, with the settlement of the temple service.

The second book of Chronicles contains the history of Solomon, Rehoboam, Abijah, and all the succeeding kings of Judah, pretty much at large, till the Babylonish captivity.

From this short review of these four books, it appears, that

the reigns of Solomon and Rehoboam, with some small variations are common to the books of Kings and Chronicles; but that, in most other respects, they are entirely different.

9. Mr. Paine says, the book of Ezra was written immediately after the Jews returned from Babylon.

He should have known, however, that it was near fourscore years after.

10. Mr. Paine says, Ezra and Nehemiah wrote an account of the same affairs in the return of the Jews from captivity.

He is as much mistaken here as he was concerning the four books of Kings and Chronicles; for Nehemiah relates few or none of the same events with Ezra.

11. He says, Satan is nowhere mentioned in the Old Testament but in Job.

Let any man consult 2 Sam. xix. 22; 1 Kings v. 4; 2 Chron. xxi. 1; Psalm cix. 6; Zech. iii. 1: and other places, and say what dependance can be placed on this mistaken man's assertions.

12. He pretends to prove that the book of Job is the work of some heathen writer, from the words Pleiades, Orion, and Arcturus which are found in our translation. See chap. ix. 9; xxxviii. 31, 32.

In the original Hebrew, however, the words are *Hus*, *Chesil*, and *Kima*. Where then is his argument?

13. He says, the heathens were a just, moral people, not addicted to cruelty and revenge, neither were they worshippers of images.

This assertion is in direct opposition, not only to the Bible, but to the general strain of universal history.

14. Mr. Paine makes himself merry with supposing that we Priests are of opinion all the Psalms were written by David, and that he must therefore have composed some of them after his death.

But, where does he find any man of character that asserts they were all written by David? The titles to the Psalms might convince him to the contrary.

15. He says, Priests reject reason.

As a universal proposition, this is utterly false. There are none more reasonable men upon earth, than many of the Christian priests.

16. He says "almost the only parts in the book called the Bible, that convey to us any idea of God, are some chapters in Job, and the 19th Psalm. I recollect no other."

Very possibly. But then, is he not a very fit man to write against the Bible? What thinks he of the 8th psalm, the 18th. the 24th. the 29th. the 33rd. the 34th the 36th. the 46th. the 47th the 50th. the 65th. the 93rd. the 96th. the 98th. the 103rd. the 104th. the 107th. the 139th. the 145th. and a vast variety of other passages, which speak more or less of the existence, perfections, and government of the Divine Being?

17. He says, "some chapters in Job and the 19th psalm are true deistical compositions, for they treat of the Deity, through his works. They take the book of creation as the word of God; they refer to no other book; and all the inferences they make are drawn from that volume."

This declaration is so far from being true, that one half of the 19th psalm itself is occupied in celebrating the perfection of the law of Moses!

18. He says, the Jews never prayed but when in trouble.

That this is a vile slander, see 1 Kings iii. 6—9; 1 Kings viii. 23—53; and a variety of the psalms, which were composed upon joyful occasions.

The man who can thus wickedly slander a whole nation, is admirably well suited to declaim against the iniquity of priests and prophets! Bolingbroke and Voltaire were tolerably expert in perversion and defamation, but Thomas Paine, I think, excels them both in these estimable qualifications!

19. He says, king Ahas was defeated and destroyed by Pekah.

This is utterly false; he was defeated, but not destroyed. He died a natural death; and the promise of the prophet Isaiah was literally fulfilled.

20. He says, the book of Isaiah is "bombastical rant, extravagant metaphor, such stuff as a school-boy would have been scarcely excusable for writing."

Better judges than Thomas Paine are of a very different opinion. And to go no further, I challenge him, and all his friends, to produce, from any book, ancient or modern, an

oration equally eloquent with the first chapter of this despised book, or any poem more sublime than that in the fourteenth.

21. He says, the prophet of Judah was found dead by the contrivance of the prophet of Israel.

Where does he find his evidence? He can prove no such thing. There is an old-fashioned book of high authority, which saith—When the Devil speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it.

22. Solomon had his house full of wives and mistresses at the age of one and twenty.

Let him produce his evidence. Where is it recorded?

23. The infants were not butchered by Herod, because the Baptist was not involved in the destruction.

Mr. Paine ought to have known, that the parents of the Baptist did not live at Bethlehem; but at Hebron, which was at a good distance.

24. He intimates, that Christ had in view the deliverance of his country from the Roman yoke.

Assertions are not proofs; where is the evidence?

25. He says, Christ was not much known, when he was apprehended.

Where did he learn this? Produce the evidence.

26. He affirms, Christ did not intend to be apprehended and crucified.

This is in direct opposition to the Gospels, from whence all his evidence arises.

27. He asserts, that Peter was the only one of the men called Apostles, who appears to have been near the spot at the crucifixion.

It is very plain from this, that Mr. Paine knows very little about what he is so abusive. Where was John?

28. Mr. Paine calls Luke and Mark apostles.

Let any person consult the list of these twelve honourable men, and see if he can find these two names among them.

29. He says, it appears from the Evangelists, that the whole time, from the crucifixion to the ascension, was apparently not more than three or four days.

This assertion shews the most consummate ignorance of the subject upon which he writes.

30. He says, all the circumstances of Christ's conduct, be-

tween the resurrection and ascension, are reported to have happened about the same spot.

Some happened at and near Jerusalem, others in Galilee, which was upwards of fifty miles from Jerusalem.

31. He affirms, that, according to Matthew, Christ met his disciples in Galilee on the day of his resurrection.

There is a plausibility in this assertion, of which many of the others are destitute, but it is without due consideration.

32 Mr. Paine insinuates, that Christ appeared only once after his resurrection.

Read the Gospels, and judge what credit is due to such a writer. He appeared upon various occasions.

33. He asserts, that we have only the evidence of eight or nine persons to the resurrection of Christ.

Such affirmations merit nothing but contempt. Were not the twelve Apostles witnesses of this event? and what does he make of the 500 witnesses mentioned by Paul?

34. He says there was nothing miraculous or extraordinary in the conversion of St. Paul: he was struck down with lightning.

This is the apostle of Infidelity! What strange credulity is necessary to make a complete Deist?

35. Mr. Paine affirms, that St. Paul's discourse on the resurrection is "doubtful jargon—as destitute of meaning as the tolling of the bell at the funeral."

Well done, Tommy Paine, thou art a clever fellow—worthy of a seat in the French convention! We shall expect, ere long, to hear thou hast obtained one of the most honourable niches in the national Pantheon, as a benefactor of mankind!

36. Mr. Paine has the audacity repeatedly to call St. Paul a fool.

Mr. Locke, Lord Littleton, and Mr. Paley, will settle the matter of the Apostle's foolishness with this doughty champion for unbelief.

After all these instances of ignorance, falsehood, maliciousness, or misrepresentation, will any person undertake to say that Mr. Paine is a wise man.

37. Mr. Paine roundly asserts, "that there was no such book as the New Testament till more than 300 years after Christ."

If priests and prophets are such "lying rascals, that there is no believing any thing they say," I close this long catalogue of strange assertions, by asking—Who is the liar now?

The principal books, of which the New Testament consists, were in existence, and read as sacred writ, from the time they were first composed by the authors whose names they respectively bear. I defy Mr. Paine or any other man to disprove this assertion.*

I give these as so many specimens of the false, ignorant, or malicious representations of this vain-glorious man. It were an easy matter to increase the number. These, however, may suffice. It can be of little use to enlarge the selection. From the whole, it appears, that misapprehension, misrepresentation, false wit, empty declamation, scurrilous language, and bitter invective, are the sum total, that the keenest capacity, and most virulent enmity can produce against the Sacred Writings. I have examined his books repeatedly, and with scrupulous attention, and I declare, upon my salvation, that it does not appear to me, he has made good, and fairly substantiated, any one objection to the Sacred Volume, that in the smallest degree, affects the business of human redemption, or the credit of the Divine Records. He has, indeed, done his best. The book and the authors whom Milton, Locke, Addison, Boyle, Haller, Euler, and Newton had in reverence, almost to adoration, this ignorant and conceited man hath treated with all possible indignity and contempt. We have given the reader a few specimens of his ignorance; we will produce a few instances of his insolence.—Among other malignant things, with which his pamphlets abound, he says: "The books of Moses were written by some very ignorant and stupid pretenders to authorship."—"Moses was one of the most vain and arrogant of coxcombs."—"Genesis is but an anonymous book of stories, fables, and traditionary or invented absurdities, or of downright lies."—"Among the detestable villains that in any period of the world have disgraced the name of man, it is impossible to find a greater than Moses."—"The Bible is such a book of lies and contradictions, there is no knowing which part to believe, or whether any."—

* See Simpson's Essay on the Authenticity of the New Testament.

“The book of Ruth is an idle, bungling story, foolishly told, nobody knows by whom, about a strolling country girl creeping slyly to bed to her cousin Boaz.” — “Wrinkled fanaticism.” — “Priestly ignorance.” — “Studied craft of the scripture-makers.” — “Cant phrase of all the prophets.” — “Barefaced perversion.” — “The lying prophet and impostor Isaiah. and the book of falsehoods that bears his name.” — “The traitor Jeremiah.” — “Stupidity of the Bible.” — “A stupid book-maker, under the name of Jeremiah.” — “The prophets are impostors and liars.” — “Jeremiah, another of the lying prophets.” — “The poetical, musical, conjuring dreaming, strolling gentry, the prophets.” — “Elisha was a conjuror.” — “The prophets were famous for lying.” — “Some of them exulted in cursing.” — “Frantic writing,” of the prophets. — “The vicious and malignant character of a Bible prophet, or a predicting priest.” — “The cant language of a Bible-prophet.” — “This lying book the Bible.” — “The virgin Mary was debauched by a ghost.” — “Matthew was a dashing writer.” — “The writer of the book of Matthew was an exceeding weak and foolish man.” — “The sum total of a parson’s learning.” — “Priests and conjurors are of the same trade.” — “It is better, far better, that we admitted, if it were possible, a thousand devils to roam at large, and to preach publicly the doctrine of devils, if there were any such, than that we permitted one such impostor or monster as Moses, Joshua, Samuel, and the Bible-prophets, to come with the pretended word of God in his mouth and have credit among us.” — “What is it the Bible teaches us?” — “Rape, cruelty, and murder.” — “What is it the Testament teaches us?” — “To believe that the Almighty committed debauchery with a woman engaged to be married; and the belief of this debauchery is called faith.” — “Fragments of morality are irregularly and thinly scattered in the books of the New Testament.” — “The obscurity and obscene nonsense of the Testament.” — “Faith hath its origin in a supposed debauchery.” — “The descent of the Holy Ghost is such absurd stuff as is fit only for tales of witches and wizards.” — “The grovelling tales and doctrines of the Bible and the Testament are fit only to excite contempt.”

These are some of the flowers of Mr. Paine’s *Age of Reason*. I have not one word to reply. If any one of my read-

ers find a stomach for such stuff, he is very welcome to it. I envy not his taste. If he would give himself the trouble to read over Bishop Watson's Apology for the Bible, he will see most of these scurrilities handsomely chastised. I shall only apply the words of one of these Bible-writers as he contemptuously calls them, to the case in hand:—Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man?—Thy tongue deviseth mischief; like a sharp razor working deceitfully. Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue! But God shall destroy thee for ever, he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling place, and root thee out of the land of the living. The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him. Lo, this is the man, that made not God his strength—but strengthened himself in his wickedness. Psalm lii.

To proceed to other considerations:

“Some men of great ingenuity have very seriously called in question the very existence of Jesus Christ, and have contended, that there never was any such person upon earth.”

Those, that will call in question whether there ever existed upon earth such a person as Jesus Christ, may with much greater reason question the existence of Alexander, Cæsar, Pompey, and all the other heroes of antiquity.

“Others there have been who have presumed to reject the authority of the New Testament.”

Those who will undertake to deny the genuineness and authenticity of the four Gospels, with the writings of Peter, Paul, James, and John, may with much more appearance of truth, deny the authenticity of the writings of Homer and Hesiod, of Plato and Xenophon, of Horace and Virgil; seeing there is much more evidence for the authenticity of the former, than the latter.

“Does it not appear unaccountable, that the whole Jewish nation should entertain such a warm expectation of their Messiah's appearance, and that they should reject Christ when he actually did come, if he had not been an impostor?”

It is well known that many thousands of the Jews and religious proselytes were at first converted to the faith of Christ.

This sufficiently proves, that the very general rejection of Christ was not owing to a want of evidence concerning his mission, but to causes of a different nature.

If it be enquired what those causes were; it may be replied—Many false Messiahs arose about that time. This circumstance was calculated to perplex the minds of simple people, and leave them undetermined which was the true. The meanness of our Saviour's parentage; his dwelling in Galilee; his rejecting all worldly honour; the simplicity of his life and doctrine; the ignominy of his death: the sublime language of the prophets concerning his kingdom; but above all, the general wickedness of the generation in which he appeared; these seem to be sufficient causes for the rejection of the Messiah, without considering him in the light of an impostor.

Besides; by the infidelity of the Jews, we gain a large number of unsuspected witnesses to the truth of the Old Testament; and by their dispersion into all countries, they are God's witnesses, and as a seed sown for the future conversion of the nations: by their infidelity too are fulfilled abundance of prophecies: it is, moreover, a great advantage to the Gospel to have been first preached in a nation of unbelievers: it is a means of making the prophecies more attended to and more studied: it serves to shew that God did not chuse the Jews from among the nations for their own sakes: it is a warning to us to beware of the same infidelity: we are taught by it likewise, that it is not being of any particular nation or church which saveth a man: and, lastly, it is well calculated to correct a vain opinion, which every one is apt to entertain, that had we lived in the times of our Saviour, and conversed personally with him, we should have been better Christians, and obeyed without doubt and without reserve.

"Say what you please, you shall never persuade me to believe abundance of things contained in the book called the Bible."

Very good. Take your own way. I wish not to force your conviction, contrary to evidence. Only weigh the matter seriously and conscientiously, and may the Author of your being direct your determination!—But, suppose you feel yourself incapable of receiving the New Testament as a religious sys-

tem, founded in truth cannot you receive it as a system of morals, founded in policy? This will not make you a religious man indeed, but it may make you a good subject, and respectable member of civil society. It is well known, that the importance of religion, to the well being of every civil community, is a point on which the greatest politicians, no less than the most respected moralists have been generally agreed; and it is an undisputed fact, established in the page of history, that, in proportion as the influence of religion has declined in any country, in that same proportion the state itself has tended to its dissolution. Is not this an unanswerable argument, founded in universal experience, if not for the truth, yet for the utility of religion.

“But, suppose I should be convinced of the fallacy of my own opinions, and the truth of Christianity, what must I do? How shall I know, among all the uncharitable and contending denominations of Christians, who is right, and who is wrong, and to whom I should unite myself in Christian fellowship?”

Take the New Testament into your hand; read it diligently, call upon the Lord for direction faithfully, and follow whithersoever it leads the way. Take nothing upon trust; pin your faith upon no man's sleeve; to the law and the testimony.* Believe in Christ, as the word teaches; put

* Few of the Sectarists of the present day have departed farther from the Scriptural view of things than the New Church. The form of baptism in their Liturgy is this:—“I baptize thee in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is at once Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” Their confession is this:—“Dost thou believe, that God is One both in essence and in person, in whom is a divine trinity, consisting of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and that the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is He? I do.” The Holy Supper is thus administered:—“The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is the divine good of his divine love, nourish and preserve you unto eternal life. Take and eat this, in remembrance that the Lord glorified his human, and thereby became the God of heaven and earth.”

Enough! One is grieved and surprized, that any set of people should take such liberties in altering the Sacred Writings. To our own Master, however, we must each of us stand or fall.

Some time since there was a Letter written and addressed to the Clergy in behalf of Swedenborg's Theological Works. The Letter

your whole trust and confidence in him; obey his precepts; worship God publicly and privately with sincerity and zeal; do justly love mercy, and walk humbly with your Maker; and look for his mercy through Christ Jesus unto eternal life; and be assured all shall be well.

* Be all these things, however, as they may, the religion of Jesus is a thing of which you do not approve. He might be a very good sort of a man, but his doctrines are not to your taste. If you could only get clear of the Bible, and these d—d Priests,* of every denomination, as the French have done, you then flatter yourselves we should see happier days?

is admirably well written, and in an excellent spirit, whoever was the author. But surely a man of his sense must see the fallaciousness of his own reasoning on the 13th page of the small edition, where he gives his reasons why the writings he wishes to recommend should be received. The whole force of his recommendation rests upon the reasons there given in favour of Swedenborg's divine commission, and yet those reasons are altogether without any sound and legitimate foundation. What will not ingenious men say, and how far will they not go, to establish a favourite hypothesis?

* It is greatly to be lamented, that the Clergy, in most ages of the Christian Church, have been very generally unfriendly to Toleration, and that they should have been the instruments of calling for, or stirring up, the civil power to persecution. Every good and liberal minded man must confess and bewail this misfortune. This spirit, however, has not been confined to ministers of the Establishment. Jews, Heathens, and Mahometans, Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists, have all, in their turns, when the power has come into their hands, been guilty of the same intolerant conduct.† It is human nature, and a part of its disease. But the Gospel itself, all pure, and perfective of reasonable beings, is free from the bloody charge. Jesus, the author of it, was the most generous, humane, and amiable of characters. But, alas! we have sadly forgotten, or perverted his institutions. Persecution and bloody deeds are the infallible marks of Antichrist. Rev. xvii. 6. That the Protestant churches should have imitated the Beast in this worst part of his conduct, can never be sufficiently bewailed. Every reign almost from the Reformation to the Revolution was stained with the blood of souls—Henry VIII. who contrived to remove the Pope of Rome from being Head of the English church, and put himself in his place, was a vile, tyrannical, libidinous, and bloody wretch. A considerable number of persons were put to death in his reign for conscience sake. Nay, even the excellent young King, Edward VI. was a persecutor in some cases unto death, being overpersuaded by those about him, par-

† See the Pamphlet entitled, *A Look to the Last Century; or the Dissenters weighed in their own Scales.* An instructive piece!

The Bible, and the persons appointed by that book to minister in holy things, are unquestionably great restraints upon the passions of men: and blameable as our Order has been, and bad as the world is, there is no little reason to

ticularly the good, but mistaken Cranmer. Mary and Elizabeth shed much blood on account of religion. James and Charles were not innocent. They stained their hands in blood on the same account. Cromwell, and the prevailing parties during the Rebellion, made dreadful havoc. After the Restoration, it is computed, that not less than 8000 persons perished in prison, and the sum of two millions of money was wrested from the sufferers. Sixty thousand persons are said to have suffered, in one way or other, from the Restoration to the Revolution, which was only a period of about thirty years.

Let the reader consult Dr. Doddridge's excellent Sermon, against the damnable spirit of persecution.

Indeed, all national religions, whether Pagan, Jewish, Turkish, or Christian, have ever hitherto been national tyrannies. The last began with Constantine, the first Christian emperor, and continues to this day, our own Establishment not excepted. And of what pliable stuff we parsons are made has been tried upon various occasions in this country. When Henry VIII. discarded the Pope of Rome, and made himself Pope in his place, the great body of Bishops and Clergy followed the example; very few, comparatively, suffered death for refusal. When Edward VI. rejected most of the remaining rubbish of Popery, and became Protestant, almost all the Bishops and Clergy again followed his example. Then when Mary afterwards undid all that Edward had done, and introduced Popery again, near 3000 were turned out of their Livings, but no more than four or five hundred both of the clergy and laity suffered for refusing to join her. And then, once more, when Elizabeth rejected Popery, the Clergy, very generally, imitated her conduct. Not more than 200 gave up their preferment. All these changes took place in the course of forty years. But whoever prevailed, Papist or Protestant, they were steady to their purpose of persecuting those who refused to comply with their tyrannical injunctions. Nay, even Calvin persecuted Servetus unto death; and the gentle Melancthon approved of what Calvin had done. Cranmer* had his victims; and, what is worse, the laws of England, in the close of the eighteenth century, contain bloody statutes in full force. Bloody laws, however, on account of religion, though of no force, through the liberality of the times, ought to be repealed, if it were only for the honour of old England; but there is a higher reason which should influence the professors of an unpersecuting Master.

* Cranmer was concerned in putting five or six persons to death for their religious opinions, and he himself was at last put to death by queen Mary for the same cause. A just retaliation!

suppose, it would be much worse without that Order. It is probable you have not well considered what the consequence would be of removing these grievances out of the way. A successful invasion from the French would, in all likelihood, enable you to obtain these ends, for a considerable time. Had we not, however, "better bear those ills we have, than fly to others that we know not of?" Reformation of the decayed, impolitical, and unevangelical parts of the British constitution—not surely the destruction of the whole—should be the ardent wish of every true friend to his country, and to human nature. Perfect liberty, civil and religious, is the birth-right of man. Whatever of this nature is still wanting in this happy land, might be easily obtained from the very nature of our government. No man, therefore, who is a friend to his country could desire to see it involved in political ruin, for the sake of obtaining what he may conceive to be some considerable advantages. Enlighten the public mind, and it will not be long before all remaining abuses shall be rectified.

*Delenda est Carthago** is the uniform language of Frenchmen. What the meaning of that phrase will be, we may form a pretty good idea, from the history of Carthage, and the treatment which Lyons, one of their own cities, received, when it refused to comply with the decrees of the Convention. It is worth while to state this at some length, as a useful lesson to my Countrymen.

By the new constitution of France, it was decreed, that the King could not be dethroned, unless found at the head of an army against his country. This was to be regarded as the highest crime he could possibly commit, and even for this he could be punished no otherwise than by being dethroned. "No crime whatever," says the constitution, "shall be construed to affect his life." This constitution every Frenchman had sworn "to obey, and maintain with all his might." When, therefore, it was proposed to the people of Lyons,

* The city of Carthage was taken and plundered by the Romans 144 years before the birth of Christ. It was twenty-four miles in compass, and the burning of it continued for seventeen days together. Cato was the author of the sentence, *Delenda est Carthago*, and Scipio put it in execution, with infinite horror, blood, and slaughter. See the Roman History for the account at large.

by the emissaries of the National Convention, to petition for the death of the King they replied, almost with one voice, "No: We have sworn, with all France, to maintain the new constitution with all our might. That constitution declares, that no crime whatsoever shall affect the life of the King. For any thing we have yet seen or heard, we believe him innocent of every crime which has been laid to his charge. The mode of his trial is unprecedented in the annals of injustice, the Convention being at once accuser, evidence and judge. We believe him perfectly innocent; but whether he be or not, the constitution that we have, by a solemn oath, bound ourselves to maintain with all our might, declares, that no crime whatever shall be construed to affect his life: that life, therefore, we cannot, we will not demand. The rest of the nation may sport with engagements which they have called the Almighty to witness; they may add the crime of assassination to that of perjury; they may stain themselves with the blood of their innocent and unfortunate prince; the Lyonesse never will."

This was an answer full of good sense, justice, piety, and honour.

What, however, was the consequence? The Convention immediately vowed vengeance. A numerous army was prepared. Siege was laid to the city. Ten thousand of the inhabitants defended it for sixty days against fifteen times their number, though it had neither magazines nor fortifications. Thirty thousand men were slain without the city. Provisions failed within. A capitulation was proposed by the besieged. The besiegers, however, knowing the extremity to which the city was reduced for want of bread, would grant them no terms whatever, without putting to death indiscriminately all those who had taken up arms within the city. Seeing no hopes of capitulation, the besieged determined to cut their way through the enemy, or fall in the attempt. The besiegers knowing all that passed from their partizans within the city, were prepared to receive them; insomuch that out of near four thousand persons who made this desperate effort, the whole were either killed or taken, except about fifty *

* The French have always been a brave and warlike people. In no war, however, did they ever fight with such desperate and

After this the victors shewed such mercy as might be expected from them. Not content with butchering their prisoners in cold blood, they took a pleasure in making them die by inches, and in insulting them in the pangs of death. Placing several together they killed one of them at a time, to render death more terrible to the rest. Neither sex nor age had any weight with them. Above two hundred women, thirty of whom had children at the breast, whom conjugal love had led to follow their husbands; more than fifty old men, whom filial piety had snatched from the assassin's stab, were all most savagely butchered. The death of Madame de Visague deserves particular notice. This young lady was about seventeen years of age, and very near her time of delivery. A party of the democrats found her behind a hedge, to which place she had drawn her husband, who was mortally wounded. When they discovered her, she was on her knees, supporting his head with her arm. One of them fired upon her with a carabine,

ferocious courage as in the present. On the first of June against Lord Howe, and in the other more recent actions, they displayed the most determined resolution. The Dutch did the same in the late action against Admiral Duncan. But if the French and Dutch displayed such feats of bravery, what must the English have done? By land too, as well as by sea, the English, in the course of the present unhappy struggle, have discovered very eminent superiority. We usually say, Facts are stubborn things. Let the following then speak the language of honest truth: at Lincelle, 1100 British Guards stormed a formidable work, defended by six times their number, completely routed the enemy, and made themselves masters of the artillery.—In an action near Cateau 1800 British Cavalry defeated their army of 25,000 men, pursued them to the gate of Cambray, took their general prisoner, and upwards of fifty pieces of cannon.—At the battle of Tournay a small British brigade, under the command of general Fox, drove back general Pichegru's left wing, and decided the victory, till that moment doubtful.—At a sortie from Nimieguen, six British Battalions marched out in the middle of the trenches, threw themselves, without firing a shot, into the enemy's trenches, dispersed the troops that guarded them, and after being in possession of them two hours, and completely destroying the works, returned in perfect order to the town, without the enemy daring to harrass them.—What feats did not Sir Charles Grey perform in the West Indies?—What has become of the French East India possessions!

See *Le Messurier's Thoughts on a French Invasion*, and *Williams's Account of the Campaign in the West Indies in the year 1794*.

another quartered her with his hanger, while a third held up the expiring husband to be a spectator of their more than hellish cruelty.

Several wounded prisoners were collected together, and put into a ditch, with sentinels placed round them, to prevent them from killing themselves, or one another; and thus were they made to linger, some of them two or three days, while their enemies testified their ferocious pleasure by all the insulting gesticulations of savages.

Such was the fury of the triumphant democrats,* that the deputies from the Convention gave an order against burying the dead, till they had been cut in morsels. Tollet, the infa-

* The world has now existed near 6000 years; and we who live in the present period are favoured with the experience of all former ages. During those ages, every kind of government has been tried. And it is found by experience, that every kind of government has its peculiar advantages and disadvantages. To guard against the inconveniencies peculiar to each, the wisdom of Tacitus conceived, that a mixed form of government, consisting of King, Lords, and Commons, if it were practicable, would be the most perfect; but yet he could not conceive such a government to be possible. His words are: "*Cunctas nationes aut Reges, aut Primores, aut Populus rexerunt, dilecta ex his et consociata Reipublicæ forma laudari facilius quam evenire; aut si eveniat, non diuturna esse, potest.*" *Tact. Ann. 1.*

The British government, however, has long reduced this idea, by him deemed impossible, to practice: and it should really seem, not only from our own experience in this country, but from the conduct of the Americans in forming their constitution, and from the conduct of the French in forming theirs, that three estates, to act as checks one upon another, forms the most perfect system of government human wisdom can contrive for the happiness of man. The Americans have two houses and a president, who is the same as our king, only called by another name: and the French, during their late sanguinary revolution, had two estates, and five directors, who occupied the place of our king and his privy council. So that after all their experience, convulsions, and blood, the British government was at last the model they are constrained to follow. This consideration ought to induce us Englishmen, not only to be contented with, but to glory in our constitution, as a most finished model of human wisdom. We may change, but it is impossible we can change for the better. All that we should desire is, that every thing may be removed from it, which is inconsistent with its purity and perfection. Our present Legislature is competent to the correction of every abuse.—See a just account of the excellence of the British constitution in Montesquieu's *Spirit of Laws*, b. xi. c. 6.

mous apostate priest of Trevoux, went blood-hound like, in quest of a few unhappy wretches, who had escaped destruction; and when, by perfidious promises, he had drawn them from their retreats, he delivered them up to the daggers of their assassins.

Of the little army that attempted the retreat, six hundred and eighteen were brought back in chains; some of them died of their wounds, and all those who were not relieved from life this way, were dragged forth to an ignominious death.

Prior to these misfortunes there was an infamous assembly in Lyons, which took the name of the democratic club. In this club a plot was laid for the assassination of all the rich in one night. Their oath was—"We swear to exterminate all the rich and aristocrats; their bloody corpses thrown into the Rhone, shall bear our terrors to the affrighted sea." This plot was happily discovered in time to prevent its effects; and the president Challier with two others were condemned to die. This Challier was looked on as a person of infamous character before the revolution; and, since the revolution, he had imbrued his hands in the blood of his own father!

After the capture of the city, the above democratic club was re-organized, and Javogues, the deputy from the Convention, became its new president. After having represented Challier as a martyr to the cause of liberty, he addressed himself to the assembly in nearly these terms:—"Think," said he, "of the slavery into which you are plunged, by being the servants and workmen of others; the nobles, the priests, the proprietors, the rich of every description, have been long in a combination to rob the democrats, the real sans culotte republicans, of their birth-right. Go, citizens; take what belongs to you, and what you should have enjoyed long ago. Nor must you stop here; while there exists an aristocracy in the buildings, half remains undone. Down with those edifices, raised for the profit or pleasure of the rich; down with them all: commerce and arts are useless to a warlike people, and the destruction of that sublime equality, which France is determined to spread over the whole globe." He told this deluded populace, that it was the duty of every good citizen to discover all those whom he knew to be guilty of having, in thought, word,

or deed conspired against the republic. He exhorted them to fly to the offices open for receiving such accusations, and not to spare one lawyer, priest, or nobleman. He concluded this harangue, worthy of one of the damned, with declaring, that for a man to accuse his own father was an act of civism worthy a true republican, and that to neglect it was a crime which should be punished with death.

The deeds which followed this diabolical exhortation were such as might be expected. The bloody democrats left not a house, not a hole unsearched; men and women were led forth from their houses with as little ceremony as cattle from their pens. The square where the guillotine stood was reddened with blood like a slaughter-house; while the piercing cries of the surviving relations were drowned in the more vociferous howlings of *Vive la Republique*.

Soon after this, orders were given from the Convention for the demolition of the city. A hundred houses were destroyed per day. All the hospitals, manufactories, banks, &c. were destroyed, without exception. Before the revolution, the city contained above 150,000 inhabitants. It was the second town, with respect to population, in France, and the first manufacturing town in all Europe. It does not now contain 70,000 inhabitants, and those are all reduced to beggary and ruin.—As for trade there is no such thing thought of. The last report to the Convention, respecting Lyons, declares the inhabitants without work or bread.

It is difficult to stifle the voice of nature, and to stagnate the involuntary movements of the soul; yet even this was attempted, and in some degree effected, by the deputies of the Convention. Perceiving that the above scenes of blood and devastation had spread a gloom over the countenances of the innocent inhabitants, and that even some of the soldiers seemed touched with compunction; they issued a mandate, declaring every one suspected of aristocracy, who should discover the least symptom of piety, either by his words or his looks!

The preamble of this mandate makes the blood run cold: "By the thunder of God! in the name of the representatives of the French people, on pain of death it is ordered, &c. &c." Who would believe, that this terrific mandate, forbidding men to weep, or look sorrowful, on pain of death, concluded

with, *Vive la Liberte!* Liberty for ever! Who would believe that the people, who suffered this mandate to be stuck up about their city like a play bill, had sworn to live free or die?"*

In spite, however, of all their menaces, they still found, that remorse would sometimes follow the murder of a friend or relation. Conscience is a troublesome guest to the villain, who yet believes in a hereafter. The deputies therefore were resolved to banish this guest from the bosom of their partizans, as it had already been banished from their own.

With this object in view, they ordered a solemn civic festival in honour of *Challier*. His image was carried round the city, and placed in the churches. Those temples which had, many of them, for more than a thousand years, resounded with hosannas to the Supreme Being were now profaned by the adorations paid to the image of a parricide.

All this was but a prelude to what was to follow the next day. It was Sunday,† the day consecrated to the worship of

* Under the most extravagant professions of liberty, the French are now become the greatest slaves in Europe. Wherever they go, they pretend to offer the people liberty: but no sooner do the silly folks listen and believe, than they find themselves plundered and enslaved.

† The French, before the Revolution, were extremely inattentive to the sanctification of the sabbath: and by a most striking retaliation of Providence, they are now entirely deprived of the sabbath! Many in this country, especially the nobility and gentry, are almost universally treading in the same steps: and have we reason to suppose we shall not, ere long, be treated in the same manner? Were I an Infidel in principle, I would observe the sabbath day, for the sake of example. For if religion could be proved to have no foundation in truth, it must be allowed to be extremely convenient for the purpose of keeping mankind in order. "I go to church sometimes," said the late infidel Earl of Oxford, "in order to induce my servants to go to church. A good moral sermon may instruct and benefit them. I only set them an example of listening, not of believing." And what injury would his Lordship have sustained, if he had both listened, believed, and obeyed? All hypocrites are base and contemptible characters, whatever specious attainments they may possess of a literary, philosophical, or political kind. It does not appear that his Lordship, any more than Hume and Franklin, ever gave Christianity a serious and conscientious investigation. They were all too busy in life, and had little inclination to religious pursuits. The carnal minds of a Nobleman and a Philosopher are equally at enmity against God:

our blessed Redeemer. A vast concourse of democrats, men and women, assembled at a signal agreed on, formed themselves into a mock procession, preceded by the image of Châllier, and followed by a little detached troop, each bearing in his hand a chalice, or some other vase of the church. One of these sacrilegious wretches led an ass, covered with a priest's vestment, and with a mitre on his head. He was loaded with crucifixes and other symbols of the Christian religion, and had the Old and New Testaments suspended to his tail. Arrived at the square called the *Terreaux*, they then threw the two Testaments, the crucifixes, &c. into a fire, prepared for the purpose, made the ass drink out of the sacramental cup, and were proceeding to conclude their diabolical profanations with the massacre of all the prisoners, to appease the ghost of Châllier, when a violent thunder-gust put an end to their meeting, and deferred the work of death for a few hours.

The pause was not long. The deputies, profiting by the impious frenzy with which they had inspired the soldiery and the mob, and by the consternation of the respectable inhabitants, continued their butchery with redoubled fury. Those who led the unhappy sufferers to execution, were no longer ordered to confine themselves to such as were entered on the list of proscription, but were permitted to take whomsoever they themselves thought worthy of death! To have an enemy among the democrats, to be rich, or even thought rich, was a sufficient crime. The words nobleman, priest, lawyer, merchant, or even honest man, were so many terms of proscription. Three times was the place of the guillotine changed; at every place holes were dug to receive the blood, and yet it ran in the gutters! The executioners were tired, and the deputies, enraged to see that their work went on so slowly, represented to the mob, that they were too merciful, that vengeance lingered in their hands, and that their enemies ought to perish in mass!

Accordingly, the next day, the execution in mass began. The prisoners were led out, from a hundred to three hundred at a time, into the out-skirts of the city, where they were fired upon, or stabbed.* One of those massacres de-

* See much more to the same purpose in Peter Porcupine's *Bloody Buoy*, and in Barruel's *History of the French Clergy*.

serves particular notice. Two hundred and sixty-nine persons, taken indiscriminately among all classes and all ages, were led to Brotteaux, and there tied to trees. In this situation they were fired upon with grape shot. Numbers of these unfortunate prisoners had only their limbs broken by the artillery; these were dispatched with the sword or the musket. The greatest part of the bodies were thrown into the Rhone, some of them before they were quite dead. Two men, in particular, had strength enough to swim to a sand-bank in the river. One would have thought, that, thus saved as it were by a miracle, the vengeance of their enemies would have pursued them no farther; but no sooner were they perceived, than a party of the dragoons of Lorraine crossed the arm of the river, stabbed them, and left them a prey to the fowls of the air.

Among others, who fell into the hands of the democrats, was Mons. Chapuis de Maubourg, one of the first engineers in Europe. They offered to spare his life, if he would serve

Carrier alone, deputy from the Convention, put to death at Nantz and other places in the south of France, more than 40,000 persons, including men, women, and children.

Such men are to be considered in the light of Jehus, who are appointed to execute the Divine vengeance upon those persons and places, which have incurred the displeasure of the Almighty. Nantz contained the richest merchants in the kingdom, and carried on a very considerable trade in the blood of human creatures.

Bishop Burnet was in France at the time of the horrible persecution of the Protestants under Lewis XIV.

"I do not think," says he, "that, in any age, there was ever such a violation of all that is sacred, either with relation to God or man; and what I saw and knew there from the first hand, hath so confirmed all the ideas that I had taken from books, of the cruelty of that religion, that I hope the impression which this hath made upon me, shall never end but with my life.—From the circumstances, it may be well termed, The Act of the WHOLE CLERGY of France."

Travels, Let. 5, p. 246, 247.

If we would see other accounts of what may be expected from a successful invasion of this country by the French, we may be amply gratified by Anthony Aufrere's, Esq. Warning to Britain against French Perfidy and Cruelty towards the Peasants of Suabia; by Peter Porcupine's Democratic Principles Illustrated; and by Anecdotes of the conduct of the French in Franconia. To these may be added Turreau's History of the Vendean War; Lavater's Remonstrance with the French Directory; and a work called, A Rapid View of the Overthrow of Switzerland.

in the armies of the Convention. They repeated this offer, with their carabines at his breast. "No," replied this gallant man, "I have never fought but for my God and my king: despicable cowards! fire away!"*

* The dying behaviour of various of the victims was very noble and animated. Where so many merit praise, it is difficult to select.

The King acquitted himself extremely well in the last trying scenes of his life; but he was a main support of the Beast; and though he died piously, he died a determined catholic; not knowing that this was one of the main causes of his destruction.

It is but justice to his character to observe, what I believe is not generally known, that it was the late Queen of France's party, which forced on the King the treaty with America, in the view of depressing Great Britain. Louis considered it as an unfair measure, and threw away the pen, when urged to sanction it with his signature. But in an evil hour for himself and his family, he relented, on repeated importunity; he signed the fatal instrument which involved both hemispheres in the horrors of war; and, in so doing, he remotely signed the warrant for his own execution. What a lesson is this to men of all ranks to be just and honourable in their dealings?

The princess of Lamballe was, after the royal family, one of the most illustrious victims of that bloody period. She was first confined in the Temple, and was afterwards sent to the prison of La Force, where the massacre began early in the morning. At three o'clock she was witness to the preparations making for her destruction. At seven she was dragged by the hair of her head into the court where the victims waited their final sentence. Here she continued, in a standing posture, to witness all the horrid proceedings till nine o'clock, when she herself was called before the bloody tribunal. They asked her a few questions; all which she answered with firmness. They charged her with certain crimes; all which she denied. Being in a very short time condemned, without any proof of guilt, she was dragged to the gate; and from the gate through a double line of assassins to the place of execution, through a variety of insults and reproaches. By the side of a pile of dead bodies, she was commanded to kneel, and ask pardon of the nation. Firmly she replied, "I have not injured the nation; and will not ask pardon!"—Your release is the price of your obedience. "I expect no favour from the hands of ruffians, who dare to call themselves the nation."—Once more, obey: kneel down, and ask pardon, if you wish to live.—"No: I will not bend my knee—No: I will ask no pardon, no favour from you."—Kneel down and ask pardon, was re-echoed from a thousand voices; but in vain. She remained superior to fear. Two ruffians seized her by the arms, and were ready to tear her in pieces. With all the strength she could gather, she exclaimed, "Go on, ruffians, I will not ask pardon." Being enraged at her firmness, the fellows rush

The murder in mass did not rob the guillotine of its prey; there the blood flowed without intermission. Death itself was not a refuge from democratic fury. The bodies of the prisoners, who were dead of their wounds, and of those, who, not able to support the idea of an ignominious death, had given themselves the fatal blow, were carried to the scaffold, and there beheaded, receiving thousands of kicks from the sans culottes, because the blood would not run from them. Persons from their sick beds, old men not able to walk, and even women found in child-bed, were carried to the murderous machine. The respectable Mons. Lauras was torn from his family of ten children, and his wife big with the eleventh.—This distracted matron ran with her children, and threw herself at the feet of the brutal deputy Collet D Herbois.—No mercy!—Her conjugal tenderness, the cries of her children, every thing calculated to soften the heart, presented themselves before him; but in vain. “Take away,” said he to the officious ruffians by whom he was surrounded “take away the rebel and her whelps.” Thus spurned from the presence of him, who alone was able to save her beloved husband, she followed him to the place of execution. Her shrieks, when she saw him fall, joined to the wildness of her looks, but too plainly foretold her approaching end. She was seized with the pains of child-birth, and was carried home to her house. But, as if her tormentors had shewn her too much lenity, the sans culotte commissary soon after arrived, took possession of all the effects in the name of the sovereign people, drove her from her bed and her house, from the door of which she fell dead in the street!

About three hundred women hoped, by their united prayers and tears, to touch the hearts of those ferocious deputies; but all their efforts were in vain as those of M. Lauras.—They were threatened with a discharge of grape shot. Two

on her with drawn swords, lay open her body, cut off her head, take out her heart, bite it with their teeth, put it in a basin, lift the head on a pike, and carry them about the streets of Paris. Her body was stripped, and exposed naked to the populace.—For a fuller account see Barruel.

This lady was a person of the most amiable manners and benevolent heart; faithful to her friend, and kind and liberal to all. During the whole time she passed in the prison of La Force, she supported all the poor who happened to be there.

of them, who, notwithstanding the menaces of the democrats, still had the courage to persist, were tied during six hours to the posts of the guillotine; their own husbands were executed before their eyes, and their blood sprinkled over them!

M. Servan, a lovely young woman of about eighteen years of age, was executed, because she would not discover the retreat of her father! "What," said she nobly, to the democratic committee, "What! betray my father! impious villains! how dare you suppose it?"

M. Cochet, a lady equally famed for her beauty and her courage, was accused of having put the match to a cannon during the siege, and having assisted in her husband's escape. She was condemned to suffer death. She declared herself with child; and the truth of this declaration was attested by two surgeons. In vain did she implore a respite. In vain did she plead the innocence of the child that was in her womb. Her head was severed from her body, amidst the death-howls of the democratic brigands!

To this long account of horrible villanies must be added another, if possible, still more detestable—libidinous brutality! Javogues, one of the deputies from the Convention, opened the career. His example was followed by the soldiery and the mob in general. The wives and daughters of almost all the respectable inhabitants, particularly of such as had emigrated, or who were murdered, or in prison, were put in a state of requisition, and were ordered, on pain of death, to hold their bodies—I spare the reader the term made use of in the decree—in readiness, for the embraces of the true republicans!—Nor were they content with violation: the first ladies of the city were led to the tree of Liberty—Of Liberty! and there made to take the hands of chimney-sweepers and common felons.*

If to these deeds of blood committed at Lyons, we add the murders perpetrated in other parts of France—at Nantz, 27,000; at Paris, 150,000; in La Vendee, 300,000; and, in short, through the whole extent of that unhappy country,

* The facts here related are taken from Mr. John Philips's small pamphlet on the subject, as his is extracted from a French treatise, and Peter Porcupine's Bloody Buoy.

two millions of persons, within six or seven years; among whom are reckoned 250,000 women; 230,000 children; besides those murdered in the womb; and 24,000 christian priests;* if, moreover, we consider, in what manner the French, without just offence, have treated the small independent state of Geneva,† and how many of its most wealthy

* The serious Christian will remember these are the days of vengeance for the innocent blood which was shed in that wide-extended kingdom, under the predecessors of the late unfortunate King. The doctrine of retaliation, though little attended to in general, is an undoubted law of God's kingdom in the government of the world. A moral governour must be morally just. He that sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed. Consult Simpson's Key to the Prophecies, for a large number of instances, wherein the retaliating providence of God is visible to the most inattentive observer. Barruel's History of the French Clergy during the Revolution, and Peter Porcupine's Bloody Buoy, contain an awful counterpart to Claude's Complaints of the Protestants of France. The French Philosophers have scarcely been more cruel to the Clergy of France, during the Revolution, than the Clergy of France, at different periods, have been to the Protestants of France. We are all crying out against the wickedness and cruelty of the present governours of that great kingdom, but we forget that the Kings, Bishops, Clergy, Nobles, and Gentry of the land played the same game, and acted the same tragedy, not very many years ago.—It is the Lord's controversy for the blood of his servants.—The above two millions is the number of persons murdered, besides those which have fallen in battle.

† "Let the mal-contents in every nation of Europe look at Holland, and at Belgium. Holland was a hive of bees; her sons flew on the wings of the wind to every corner of the globe, and returned laden with the sweets of every climate. Belgium was a garden of herbs, the oxen were strong to labour, the fields were thickly covered with the abundance of the harvest. Unhappy Dutchmen! ye will still toil, but not for your own comfort; ye will still collect honey, but not for yourselves; France will seize the hive as often as your industry shall have filled it. Ill-judging Belgians! ye will no longer eat in security the fruits of your own grounds; France will find occasion, or will make occasion, to participate largely in your riches; it will be more truly said of yourselves than of your oxen, ye plough the fields, but not for your own profit."

See Bishop Watson's well-timed Address to the People of Great Britain, for the above extract. I exceedingly approve of the spirit of the whole, but I much question whether Mr. Wakefield's objections to two particulars may not be just, viz. the comparison between 200 pounds a year and the 2000℥; and the similitude concerning the gradual sinking of the several parts of a

inhabitants sell a sacrifice to satisfy the rapacity of the deputies from the Convention; we shall obtain a pretty clear idea of what we may expect, if they should succeed in their designs against us. We should not only see Bibles and Priests removed out of the way, an event, as some affect to think, devoutly to be wished, but the country must undergo every possible calamity. Great Britain and Ireland would become either a province of France, or be divided into two or three small contending republics, like Holland, dependent upon them. Our navy,* would be conveyed into their ports. London,† and all our great mercantile

large structure. Most of the other parts of Mr. Wakefield's pamphlet are extremely unworthy of his talents.

We may now also call the attention of the mal-contents of every nation of Europe, to the situation of Italy, Rome, Malta, Naples, but, above all, to the brave, yet unoffending Swiss.

The learned Bishop, however, forgets in his Address to take into his estimation the state of religion in this country. In my judgment, the corrupt state of the Established religion is the grand and original cause of much of our immorality; and these two together are the only true and genuine sources of our national distress. Let us remove out of the way every unevangelical stumbling block, and turn unto God in good earnest, and he will soon make our enemies to be at peace with us. Could this be done, the throne of King George should be as the days of Heaven!

The French Revolution is a most amazing and tremendous event, and will probably be a means of new-modelling the face of Europe, if not of the whole world. The extraordinary efforts which people are making in the arts and sciences, are as vigorous as those they are making in war. The Governour of the universe has formed them for great purposes, both of judgment and mercy; of judgment to the present race of men; of mercy to the generations which shall follow. This, however, we know, in every event of things, it shall be well with them that fear the Lord.

* In the year 1693, the royal navy of England consisted of 111 ships of 40 guns and upwards. In the year 1793 it consisted of upwards of 300 ships of war, from the first to the sixth rate, besides near 200 sloops, &c.

† London is now what Tyre was in ancient times. One cannot help entertaining strong apprehensions of its sharing the same fate. The trade and riches of it are immensely large, and the corruption and iniquity of the place are in like proportion. See the account of Tyre in the Prophets.

This metropolis is unparalleled, in extent and opulence, in the whole habitable globe, except, perhaps, Pekin, in China, Jeddo, in Japan, and Houssa, in Africa, which are all said to be larger.

It comprehends, besides London, Westminster, and Southwark,

towns* would be exhausted of their riches. Our foreign

no less than forty-five villages, of considerable extent, independent of a vast accession of buildings upon the open fields in the vicinity. Its length is nearly eight miles, its breadth three, and its circumference twenty-six. It contains above 8,000 streets, lanes, alleys, and courts, and more than 65 different squares. Its houses, warehouses, and other buildings, make 162,000, besides 246 churches and chapels, 207 meeting-houses for Dissenters, 43 chapels for Foreigners, and 6 synagogues for the Jews; which in all make 502 places of public worship. The number of inhabitants during the sitting of parliament is estimated at 1,250,000. Among these are found about 50,000 common prostitutes, and no less than 60,000 thieves, coiners, and other bad persons of all descriptions. The annual depredations on the public, by this numerous body of pilferers, are estimated at the sum of 2,100,000 sterling. In this vast city, there are, moreover, upwards of 4000 seminaries for education—8 institutions for promoting morality—10 institutions for promoting the arts—122 asylums for the indigent—17 for the sick and lame—13 dispensaries—704 charitable institutions—58 courts of justice—7,040 professional men connected with the various departments of the law.—There are 13,500 vessels trading to the river Thames in the course of a year; and 40,000 waggons going and returning to the metropolis in the same period, including their repeated voyages.—The amount of exports and imports to and from the Thames is estimated at 66,811,932*l.* sterling annually; and the property floating in this vast city every year is 170,000,000 pounds sterling. These circumstances may be sufficient to convince us of the amazing extent and importance of the capital of the British empire. See these things detailed more at large in an excellent Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis by—Colquhoun, Esq.

And is all this national opulence and grandeur to be buried in one general ruin, through the transgression and growing depravity of the people?

* About the year 1700, the town of Manchester contained only one church, and in 1717 the inhabitants were 8,000. The number of churches and chapels of the establishment of Manchester and Salford is now twelve, and about the same number of dissenting chapels of various descriptions. The inhabitants are between 60 and 70,000.

In 1700, Liverpool had only 5,149 inhabitants. In 1790, it had 70,000. In 1709 it had 84 ships; in 1792, it had 584.

Several other towns in this country are increased nearly in the same proportion. O happy England, if thou didst but know thy happiness! The ingratitude and rebellion of the country, however, against the laws of the Divine Being must terminate in our severe chastisement. The wickedness of the inhabitants is inconceivably great. Compare the lives of the Clergy—the Lawyers and Attornies—the Medical class—the Soldiery—the Sailors—the Common people—with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and how alarming the contrast! The Nobles and Gentry of the land, with some few

possessions would fall into their hands. Our trade* would be annihilated; our real estates† change masters; our personal property be swept into France; our poor would languish and die in the streets for want of bread, none having it in

exceptions, are becoming incurably immoral, as well as irreligious. The trading part of the nation are all set upon their gain. Serious, uniform, and conscientious godliness, is only found among a few solitary individuals. The sabbath day is fashionably, and very generally, prostituted to secular purposes. The public worship of Almighty God is grievously neglected by all ranks of men. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is very thinly attended, and this only occasionally, and not as a serious duty and privilege. In short; the signs of the times are such as to give the most serious apprehension to every well wisher to his King and Country. In London, there are, I believe, near a million of souls, including children, who seldom or never attend public worship under any denomination!—Manchester contains near seventy thousand inhabitants; and between forty and fifty thousand absent themselves totally from every place of public worship on the sabbath day!

Birmingham is said to contain about 70,000 inhabitants. There are five churches, and fourteen meeting-houses, of different descriptions. It is not supposed that more than 5,000 persons attend any place of public worship on any one day; not more than 10,000 attend any public worship at all; so that there are 60,000 souls in that town, who may be said not to have any religion at all; that is, about one in seven, or seven to one. This is a very affecting consideration.

Macclesfield and its environs contain 9 or 10,000 people. We have two churches and five meeting-houses. Not more, however, than 3,000 of the nine attend public worship, in all the places put together. So that here are 6,000 souls, including children, who may be considered as Infidels in principle, or practice, or both, the same children being exempt from the charge.

* In 1700, England had 2,281 trading vessels, carrying 261,222 tons burden. In 1792, England had 10,423 do. carrying 1,168,468 tons.

In 1692, Scotland had 8,618 tons of shipping. In 1792, Scotland had 2,143 ships, carrying 162,274 tons.

In 1793, the trading vessels of the British dominions were 16,329, manned with 118,952 sailors, and carrying 1,564,520 tons.

History furnishes us with nothing equal to this account.

† The quantity of land cultivated in England and Wales is about 32 millions of acres. The gross produce of the same is about 75 millions of pounds sterling annually; and the neat rental about 24 millions.

The average annual produce of the kingdom, arising from land and animals, stands nearly according to the following estimate:

their power to relieve them.* We should be involved in all the miseries that human nature, in a civilized state, is capable of undergoing. And from being one of the first, most powerful, and happy nations upon the face of the earth, we should become one of the lowest, weakest, and most wretched kingdoms in Europe. And could any man, for the sake of ridding the country of these bugbears, the Bible and the Priests,† wish to see all this evil come upon us? If

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Ten millions of acres of wheat, rye, &c. at 4l. per acre	40,000,000
Four millions of acres of hay, clover, &c. at 50s. per do.	10,000,000
Eight thousand tons of hops, at 50l. per ton	400,000
One million of beeves fattening 20 weeks at 18d. p. week	1,500,000
One million of sheep fattening 13 weeks at 6d. per week	1,950,000
Two millions of milch cows, 40 weeks milk at 2s. 6d.	
per week	8,050,900
Wool	3,200,000
Ten millions of lambs, when weaned at 5s. per lamb	2,500,000
Two millions of calves at 20s. per calf	2,000,000
Four millions of pigs at 5s. per pig	1,000,000
Fruits and vegetables for 8,000,000 of people	4,500,000
Poultry, eggs, &c. &c. &c.	

75,100,000

* The public and private charities of London amount to 750,000 pounds annually; and the poor rates of England and Wales altogether make the enormous sum of 2,200,000 pounds a year, besides all private charities and sunday-schools. Arthur Young, Esq. tells us, in his Letter to Mr. Wilberforce, that the amount of what is paid for labour of all sorts in England is not less than one hundred millions sterling—poor-rates and charities of every sort cannot amount to less than seven millions.

† It is a melancholy reflection, that among all the clergy in this country, there were not quite 200 who sacrificed their interest to principle in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. See Gray's Sermons at the Bampton Lecture, p. 238.—In Charles the Second's time, however, there were upwards of 2000 clergyman, who sacrificed their interests to principle, besides a considerable number of conscientious men, it is to be presumed, who continued in their places.

Bigotry and persecution generally defeat their own purposes! What a consequence did not this mad measure give to the dissenting interest in England? The same foolish game was played by the Bishops and Clergy in the present century. Instead of encouraging, moderating, and regulating the pious zeal of a few young men, in Oxford, by gentle and lenient measures, they shut their churches against them, and compelled them to go out into the highways and hedges to preach to those who were inclined to hear them; and though they were then but a small band, they are now

any person approves not of religion and its ministers, he is at perfect liberty, in this free country, to decline paying

become a goodly company, and have already overspread England, Scotland, Ireland, America, and the West Indies.—All this weight too is thrown into the dissenting scale! A few more such imprudent measures, and down goes Mother Church!

We have spoken on a former page on pluralities and non-residence. The former, indeed, in all ordinary cases, implies the latter. We scarce ever read an account of deaths in the periodical publications, but we find an account of one or more instances of this nature. The poet Mason is a point in hand. Though a worthy man, and a character highly respectable, he had, it appears, accumulated several preferments in the church at the same time. And it is well known to be the custom of great numbers of the Clergy in the Establishment to procure as many as their interest will reach. This we call good management, prudent foresight, taking care for a family and the like. If there be no God, it is all very well. But if we are accountable creatures, and are to exist in a future state, our present trading in Livings and Souls will not yield us satisfaction another day. It is popery, rank popery, the worst of popery, under the highest pretensions to being the most pure and reformed part of Christ's holy catholic church. I remember an anecdote apposite to the subject in hand. Bishop Burnet, in his Charges to the Clergy of his Diocese, shewed a great deal of disinterested integrity, by vehemently exclaiming against pluralities, as a most sacrilegious robbery. And, in his first visitation at Salisbury, he urged the authority of St. Bernard, who being consulted by one of his followers, whether he might accept of two benefices, replied—And how will you be able to serve them both? I intend, answered the priest, to officiate in one of them by a deputy.—Will your deputy be damned for you too? cried the saint. Believe me, you may serve your cure by proxy, but you must be damned in person. This expression so affected Mr. Kelsey, a pious and worthy clergyman then present, that he immediately resigned the rectory of Bemerton in Berkshire, worth 200 pounds a year, which he held then with one of greater value. See Bp. Burnet's Life, by T. Burnet, Esq.

We have observed, that all the bulk of church-preferment in this country, is engrossed by about one thousand clergymen, out of the eighteen thousand. I do not pretend to be accurate in this statement; but I should suppose it is not far from the truth. Whereas the emoluments of the Establishment are capable of providing for 10,000 persons in a comfortable way, by abolishing pluralities, without disturbing the present order of things. Let every Bishop retire within his diocese, and dwell among his clergy, as a father in his family. Let every Clergyman reside upon his living, superintending his people, as a shepherd his flock. And let no man be promoted to the first Livings in the kingdom, merely because he is related to or connected with some great personage; but let the

them any attention. He may think and act according to his own pleasure. Why then should any man desire to see his

useful and laborious ministers, especially when the infirmities of age come on, be accounted worthy of double honour, by being rewarded for their extraordinary services with the best Livings which the country affords.

All this, I too well know, is visionary. It is a plausible theory, but never will be reduced to practice. If it should please God, however, to put an end to the present unhappy war, and favour us once more with a settled state of things, I think it might be well for the great body of the poor Rectors, Vicars, and Curates of the country, to petition Government to take their distressed circumstances into consideration. If it should have no other effect, it would call the attention of the public to the horrible monopolies of preferments which prevail among the Bishops and higher Orders of the clergy. I would recommend that Committees should be formed in every district through England and Wales, to correspond with a grand and superintending Committee in London. Let them investigate the business of church preferments thoroughly, and drag to broad day-light all the great offenders in this pretended spiritual commerce. See a book called the Miseries and Great Hardships of the Inferior Clergy, for some useful information.

Out of the 18,000 Clergymen belonging to the Establishment of this country, there are several hundreds of zealous and lively men (and the number is much upon the increase) who, properly speaking, are the only true members of the Church of England. They believe, and preach, and live her doctrines. These conscientious men, however, are, as we have already observed, almost universally dubbed Methodists, in a way of contempt, by the majority both of Bishops and Clergy. This is shameful treatment, but so it is. Those "downy doctors, that recumbent virtues preach," who will swear any thing, and subscribe any thing, no matter whether they believe it or not, for the sake of a good bishopric or fat rectory, are among the first to exclaim against their more zealous, useful, and pious brethren. Master, so saying, and so doing, thou condemnest us.—Woe unto you, ye scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in! See Ez. xxxiv. chap.

"When nations are to perish in their sins,
'Tis in the Church the leprosy begins."

"The priestly brotherhood, devout, sincere,
From mean self-interest and ambition clear,
Their hope in heav'n, servility their scorn,
Prompt to persuade, expostulate and warn,
Their wisdom pure, and giv'n them from above.
Their usefulness insur'd, by zeal and love,

native land involved in a destruction so complete? Be assured, whenever it comes, it will be promiscuous. The

As meek as the man Moses, and withal
 As bold as in Agrippa's presence Paul,
 Should fly the world's contaminating touch,
 Holy and unpolluted—are thine such? *
 Except a few with Eli's spirit blest,
 Hophni and Phineas may describe the rest."

* O England.

Cowper's Expostulation.

As a body of men, the established Clergy of this country are by no means deficient in talents, or in learning of any description. So far is this from being the case, that it is probable there never existed a body of men of the same number, who possessed equal natural and acquired qualifications; but, we are deficient in humility, in self-denial, in piety, and in zeal for the honour of God and the salvation of souls. We want a more serious attention to the grand peculiarities of the Gospel: we are deficient in various of those qualifications which are requisite to make us successful in winning souls to Christ. To our shame be it spoken, with half our literary attainments, we suffer the Methodists, and several of the Dissenters, to outdo us exceedingly in rare and positive usefulness to mankind. We let the cause of Christ suffer and lose ground in our hands. A large party of our Order is inattentive both to religious and literary pursuits. They are mere men of the world. Another part is so occupied with literary and philosophical studies, that they have neither time nor inclination to attend to the peculiar employment of ministers of the Gospel. There is a third class of our Clergy, which is highly respectable, but whose ministerial labours are so cool and languid, and whose public discourses are so merely moral and so wholly unevangelical, that mankind are made neither much wiser nor better by their feeble exertions. In the primitive ages the divine heralds carried the sound of the Gospel throughout all lands, from "the British isles to the banks of the Ganges," in a very short space of time. But we have suffered Heathenism to return again into some countries, Mahometanism to over-run others, and Infidelity to diffuse itself among all orders of society. And it is not improbable, but in the course of a few more years, the Gospel of Christ, through our neglect, luke-warmness, and superstition, will be in a great degree banished from Christendom. We must either awake from our lethargic state, and return to evangelical principles and practices, or all is lost. Most of the higher ranks of society in this country both among the clergy and laity, have forsaken the Gospel scheme of saving a ruined world; and it is exceedingly probable the supreme Head of the church will ere long remove our candlestick, lay aside the great body of us Parsons, as a useless set of men, and deprive us of those means of grace, which we have so long enjoyed to so little purpose. The neglect of the Son and Spirit of God is the master sin of Christendom.

I could wish the reader would give himself the trouble to con-

generation then living will be, in every temporal sense, at least, totally ruined: and no man shall be able to extricate himself from the general calamity. In that case, and, indeed, in every other possible case, the Gospel of Christ affords the only sure refuge. It is calculated for both worlds. The Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will be withheld from them that walk uprightly. Those that live in the entire spirit, and under the full influence of this Divine Religion, have, even now, large enjoyment of its comforts.* And whether we

sider well what Mr. Wilberforce has written upon this subject, in his Practical View of the prevailing religious system of Professed Christians, in the higher and middle classes in this country, contrasted with real Christianity. If we had a number of such able and faithful labourers in the cause of Christianity among the laity, much good might be expected to result from their endeavours. In my opinion, men of this description are peculiarly called upon in the present day, when Infidelity is making such rapid advances, and the Clergy are in such disgrace, to exert themselves in every possible way to stem the torrent of iniquity, which is ready to bear all down before it.

See some useful thoughts on the necessity of new measures, in the Dean of Middleham's Political and Moral Consequences of a religious education, and its reverse.

* Turn back, and consider well the cases of Lord Russel, Morata, Claude, Walker, Hervey, Leland, Romaine, Bedell, and Leechman. Instead of this small number, we could have produced some hundreds of characters of a like happy kind, if it had been consistent with our design.

Bishop Burnet's declaration alone we will here transcribe, as he was a man of piety, and of large experience of men, and things, and because he delivers it as his last dying speech, and the sum of all his experience:—

“True religion,” says he, “is a perfection of human nature, and the joy and delight of every one that feels it active and strong within him.—Of this I write with the more concern and emotion, because I have felt this the true, and indeed the only joy which runs through a man's heart and life. It is that which has been for many years my greatest support. I rejoice daily in it. I feel from it the earnest of that supreme joy, which I pant and long for. I am sure there is nothing else can afford any true or complete happiness. I have, considering my sphere, seen a great deal of all that is most shining and tempting in this world. The pleasures of sense I did soon nauseate. Intrigues of state, and the conduct of affairs have something in them that is more specious; and I was for some years deeply immersed in these, but still with hopes of reforming the world, and of making mankind wiser and better. But I have found, That which is crooked cannot be made straight.

are cut off according to the common course of things, or hurried out of the world by the violence of wicked men, still we are fully persuaded it shall be well. They may destroy; but they cannot hurt us. They will only send us to our incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading inheritance, a little before the time allotted by the course of nature.

You see then, my Friends and Countrymen, it is our firm determination to adhere to the Bible, and the truths therein contained, at the risk of every thing that is held dear among men. We have counted the cost, and hesitate not a moment in saying, It is our glory and joy; dearer to us than thousands of gold and silver.

“I swear, and from my solemn oath
Will never start aside,
That in God’s righteous judgments I
Will stedfastly abide.
The world’s contempt of his commands,
But makes their value rise
In my esteem, who purest gold
Compar’d with them despise.”

Sincerely pitying, therefore, and ardently praying for, the whole generation of those unhappy persons among our Countrymen, who have forsaken the ONLY FOUNTAIN of living waters, and hewn out to themselves broken cisterns that can hold no water; with the great Lord Bacon we declare, “There never was found in any age of the world, either philosophy, or sect, or religion, or law, or discipline, which did so highly exalt the public good as the Christian faith.” With Sir Thomas Brown, “We assume the honourable stile of Christian, not because it is the religion of our country, but because, having, in our riper years and confirmed judgment, seen and examined all, we find ourselves obliged by the principles of grace, and the law of our own reason, to embrace no other name but this, being of the same belief which our Saviour taught, the Apostles disseminated, the Fathers

I acquainted myself with knowledge and learning, and that in great variety.—This yielded not happiness.—I cultivated friendship. But this also I have found was vanity and vexation of spirit, though it be of the best and noblest sort.—The sum is, Vanity of vanities, all is vanity, besides fearing God, and keeping his commandments.” See the Conclusion of the History of his own Times.

authorised, and the Martyrs confirmed." With the noble Picus Mirandula, we rest in the Bible "as the only book, wherein is found true eloquence and wisdom." With Dr. Robinson, the natural philosopher, we say, "The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament contain a system of human nature, the grandest, the most extensive and complete, that ever was divulged to mankind since the foundation of nature." With the excellent physician and philosopher Dr. Grew, we profess, that "The Bible contains the laws of God's kingdom in this lower world, and that religion is so far from being inconsistent with philosophy, that it is the highest point and perfection of it." With the no less excellent physician and philosopher Dr. David Hartley, we say, that "No writers, from the invention of letters to the present times, are equal to the penmen of the books of the Old and New Testaments, in true excellence, utility, and dignity." With the very celebrated French poet Boileau we say, "Every word and syllable of the Bible ought to be adored: it not only cannot be enough admired, but it cannot be too much admired." With the very pious and excellent Sir Matthew Hale we are clearly of opinion, "There is no book like the Bible, for excellent learning, wisdom, and use." With the celebrated Boyle, we consider it as "A matchless volume," and believe that "It is impossible we can study it too much, or esteem it too highly."* With the incomparable Newton, "we account the Scriptures of God to be the most sublime philosophy." With Milton, we are of opinion "There are no songs comparable to the songs of Sion, no orations equal

* This great Philosopher says, "Deists must, to maintain their negative creed, swallow greater improbabilities than Christians, to maintain the positive creed of the Apostles. And they must think it fitter to believe, that chance, or nature, or superstition, should perform wonderful and hardly credible things, than that the great author of nature, God, should be able to do so."

Works, vol. 5. p. 661.

John Earl of Orrery, relation to the above Mr. Robert Boyle, is also said to have been a lover of truth, even to adoration. "He was," says the writer of his life, "a real Christian, and, as such, he used to say, he constantly hoped for a better life, there trusting to know the real causes of those effects, which here struck him with wonder, but not with doubt."

to those of the Prophets, and no politics like those which the Scriptures teach." With Rousseau, every ingenious man may say, "I must confess to you, that the majesty of the Scriptures astonishes me, and the holiness of the Evangelists speaks to my heart, and has such strong and striking characters of truth, and is moreover so perfectly inimitable, that if it had been the invention of men, the inventors would be greater than the greatest heroes." With the justly renowned Seldon before mentioned, after having taken a deliberate survey of all the learning among the ancients we solemnly profess, "There is no book in the universe, upon which we can rest our souls, in a dying moment, but the Bible." And we therefore boldly declare, before the face of all the unbelieving and disobedient world, in the words of the immortal Chillingworth, "Propose to me any thing out of the Bible, and require whether I believe it or not; and seem it never so incomprehensible to human reason, I will subscribe it with hand and heart; as knowing no demonstration can be stronger than this—"God hath said so, therefore it is true." And may we not, finally, exhort and admonish the sceptical reader in the glowing language of the seraphic Young:

"Retire, and read the Bible, to be gay,
There truths abound of sovereign aid to peace,
Ah! do not prize them less because inspir'd,
As thou, and thine, are apt and proud to do.
If not inspir'd, that pregnant page had stood
Time's treasure! and the wonder of the wise!"

After these declarations, the warmth of which may seem to need some apology, you cannot wonder, O my Countrymen, if we should treat all your stale cavils, which have been a hundred times repeated, and a thousand times confuted, with the contempt they deserve, and say with the royal Psalmist (no favourite of yours, by the bye, but whom we Believers esteem one of the bravest of warriors, sublimest of poets, greatest of prophets, most seraphic of musicians, and worthiest of men,) The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple: the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes: the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever! the judgments of the

Lord are true and righteous altogether, more to be desired are they than gold, yea than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey, and the choice droppings of the honey-comb.*

You will excuse the freedom of this address, and be assured it proceeds from a heart deeply concerned for the welfare of his fellow-men. We wish to be happy ourselves, and we wish You to be partakers of the same felicity. Many of you are endowed with talents of no mean account. We lament the misapplication of them. Are your spirits perfectly at rest in your present state of mind? And do you feel satisfied with your future prospects? Give me leave to answer for you, and be not offended if I say, "No!—Far from it!—My lusts and passions lead me captive! I am a slave to evil desires!—Of the proper fear of God, which effectually restraineth from sin, I know but little!—To the genuine love of God I am an utter stranger; I scarcely know what it means!—The favour of God I have no reason to expect, in my present state of moral attainments, be the Bible true or be it false!—With all my pretensions to virtue, in my coolest moments, I feel condemned in

* Other great kings have been of the same mind. Robert, King of Sicily, declares of himself, "The Holy Books are dearer to me than my kingdom, and were I under any necessity of quitting one, it should be my diadem." And even the haughty Lewis the XIVth. "sometimes read his Bible, and was of opinion it is the finest of all books."

It is recorded too of our Edward VI. that upon a certain occasion a paper which was called for in the council-chamber happened to lie out of reach; the person concerned to produce it, took a Bible that lay by, and standing upon it, reached down the paper. The king, observing what was done, ran himself to the place, and, taking the Bible in his hands, kissed it, and laid it up again. This circumstance, though trifling in itself, implies in his Majesty great reverence for and much affection to that best of books.

More lately still, "William III. king of England, not only believed the truth of the Christian religion very firmly, but was most exemplarily decent and devout, in the public exercises of the worship of God. He was an attentive hearer of sermons, and was constant in his private prayers, and in reading the Scriptures.

Burnet's Own Times, vol. v. p. 71

my own conscience!—That which I do. I allow not; but what I would, that I do not; for what I hate, that do I.”*

“My reason this, my passion that persuades;
I see the right, and I approve it too,
Condemn the wrong, and yet the wrong pursue.”

O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the ‘unhappiness I frequently feel, and the misery I have too much reason to fear?—I would gladly be a thorough-paced Unbeliever; but for the life of me, I cannot get clear of the terror of death, the apprehension of a future reckoning, and an unaccountable foreboding of something terrible to come!”

No, my Countrymen! nor will you ever find either solid consolation in life, or a just confidence in the hour of death, till you shake off the chains of those sins, which have well nigh led you into the gulph of perdition, and obtained redemption in the blood of that Saviour, of whom, in your present state of mind, you make so little account.

Solomon, you know, has the honour of being reputed the wisest of men. But, notwithstanding his extraordinary wisdom, he was, for many years, at least, guilty of extreme folly. He sought for happiness in the gratification of the

* Dr. Doddridge, in his *Life of Colonel Gardner*, informs us, “That his fine constitution, than which perhaps there hardly ever was a better, gave him great opportunities of indulging himself in excesses; and his good spirits enabled him to pursue his pleasures of every kind, in so alert and sprightly a manner, that multitudes envied him, and called him by a dreadful kind of compliment, *The happy Rake*. Yet still the checks of conscience, and some remaining principles of so good an education as he had received, would break in upon his most licentious hours; and I particularly remember he told me, that when some of his dissolute companions were once congratulating him on his distinguished felicity, a dog happening at that time to come into the room, he could not forbear groaning inwardly, and saying to himself, Oh that I were that dog!—Such was then his happiness! and such perhaps is that of hundreds more, who bear themselves highest in the contempt of Religion, and glory in that infamous Servitude which they call Liberty.”—Reader! how is it with you in this respect? Trust a prophet and a priest for once—The wicked are like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.

body, its appetites and passions, to the neglect of God, and religion, and the care of his immortal part; but substantial happiness could no where be found. He run through the whole circle of worldly and sensual pleasures; happiness however, and ease of mind still fled before him, and eluded his pursuit. And after having made a large number of experiments for a long season, and to no manner of purpose, he stops and looks back upon what he had been doing; and the book of Ecclesiastes contains his experience. Wishing to warn his fellow creatures against the mistakes which he himself had committed in life, he turns preacher, and gives us a sermon upon the insufficiency of worldly things to make us happy. The text of this discourse seems to be: Vanity of vanities, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.

He begins his sermon by shewing, that all human courses and pursuits are vain, and do not yield full satisfaction to the mind. All things, says he, are full of labour: man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing; nor the ear filled with hearing.

From this general assertion the royal preacher proceeds to shew, that wisdom, knowledge, and learning could not make him happy.

I the preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem: and I gave my heart to see and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of men to be exercised therewith. I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit. That which is crooked cannot be made straight: and that which is wanting cannot be numbered. I communed with mine own heart, saying Lo, I am come to a great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem: yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge. And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived, that this also is vexation of spirit.

Not finding rest for his soul in the pursuits of knowledge and learning, the wise man deserts them to try if the pleasures of drinking, planting, building, music, and dancing could make him happy, and afford him that satisfaction which he had hitherto sought for in vain. I said in mine heart, go to now,

I will prove thee with mirth; therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity. I said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, What doeth it? I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting my heart with wisdom, and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life. I made me great works; I builded me houses, I planted me vineyards; I made me gardens and orchards, and planted trees in them of all kind of fruits: I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees: I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle, above all that were in Jerusalem before me: I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I gat me men-singers, and women-singers; and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts. So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me. And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them; I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour; and this was my portion of all my labour. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I laboured to do; and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.

After making many other observations upon human life, and human pursuits, and shewing how utterly insufficient they all are to constitute any of us truly easy, content, and happy; the royal preacher finishes his excellent sermon by pointing out in a few words, what is the state, the duty, and the true interest of man: Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

This is the sum of Solomon's experience and knowledge of men and things; and this is the experience of all the world. Religion is always our last resource. We must come to it one time or other, or we are undone for ever, and had better never have been born. Nothing can supply its place. The

fear, the love, the service of God, can alone make us happy. All other things; all other pursuits; all other pleasures; all other enjoyments, leave us restless, uneasy, discontent, unhappy,

“The soul uneasy, and confin’d from home,
Rests and expatiates in a world to come.”

If, to this scriptural sketch, we were disposed to add still more instances from among our own countrymen, of religious wisdom, amidst all the honours, luxury, and hurry of public station, we might observe, that Lord Chancellor Parker, Earl of Macclesfield, and William Pultney, Earl of Bath, devoted many of their leisure hours to prayer, reading, and studying the Bible, and afterwards, died with a hope full of immortality.

I might call your attention here likewise to a character much more splendid in life, but much less honourable in death. You recollect the extorted and affecting declaration of the degraded, and almost expiring Cardinal:

“Had I but serv’d my God with half the zeal
I serv’d my king, he would not in mine age
Have left me naked to mine enemies.”

Take warning by all these examples, my Countrymen; and if by any means you have been led astray from the paths of virtue and religion, be sensible of your folly, and turn back with all speed into the way of piety. It may be old-fashioned, but it is safe and honourable. Keep innocency in future, and take heed to the thing that is right, for that alone will bring a man peace at the last. If you make ten thousand efforts to find rest for your mind in any other way, they will all disappoint you. This is the experience of the whole world. And is it not your experience also?

“What nothing earthly gives, or can destroy,
The soul’s calm sunshine, and the heart-felt joy,
Is Virtue’s prize.”

Reflect upon the workings of your own hearts, in the different periods and circumstances of life, and say what your feelings have been. Was it not better with you, when you were humble minded, and went after the commandments delivered by the Lord, than it is now? Making allowance for the difference of station, may not you say with the celebrated

Madame de Maintenon: "Oh! that I could give you all my experience; that I could shew you the heaviness which preys upon the spirits of the Great,* and how hard they will find it to put out their days! Don't you see that I pine away with melancholy, in the midst of a fortune, that one could hardly have imagined, and which nothing but God's assistance keeps me from sinking under it?—I protest to you, that all stations leave a frightful void, an uneasiness, a weariness, a desire to know something else, because in all worldly attainments there is nothing which gives full satisfaction. We find no rest till we have given ourselves to God.—Then we find, that there is nothing further to be sought; that we have attained to that, which is the only good thing in this world. We meet with vexations, but we have at the same time a solid consolation and peace of heart in the midst of the greatest afflictions. †—If this, or any thing like this be your experience, why will you any longer spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not?

"In vain we seek a heav'n below the sky;
The world has false, but flatt'ring charms:
Its distant joys shew big in our esteem,
But lessen still as they draw near the eye;
In our embrace the visions die,
And, when we grasp the airy forms,
We lose the pleasing dream."

But the grand objects which Religion holds forth to our acceptance are adequate to the largest desires of the human mind. They are calculated as well for the present as the future world. We may be as happy here, in spite of all the ills of life, as is for our real good, and hereafter our happiness shall know neither measure nor end. But not like the people then described by the weeping Prophet:—Thus saith

* An anecdote to this purpose occurs to my mind, concerning one of our present Noblemen, who, being in conversation with a certain gentleman, said, "Oh! how weary am I of this d—d attendance upon Court? Had Providence cast my lot among peasants, I had been a happy man!"

"Beware what earth calls happiness; beware
All joys, but joys that never can expire."

† Letters of Madame de Maintenon, and other eminent persons.

the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths. Where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.—But they said, We will not walk therein.—Also I set watchmen over you, saying, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet.—But they said, We will not hearken.

Laugh not at this simple relation, neither despise the warning given. Stop rather for one moment, and consider upon what foundation you are building your future expectations. Though you reject Christianity, I should hope you are not so far gone as to disbelieve a state of future rewards and punishments, of some kind or other.* Your master, Thomas Paine, and, indeed, most other Deists, profess thus much at least. Take then into your serious consideration, whether you think your actions, tempers, and state of mind such, as will, upon your own principles, stand the test at the great day of account. It can do you no great harm to reflect upon your condition, to be serious for a season, and to suspect you may be wrong. Consider, that you differ essentially from some of the greatest and best men that ever lived. You stake your eternal all upon the justness—Of what?—Your opinion :—an opinion, in confutation of which multitudes have sacrificed their lives, and which many of the first characters now upon earth would controvert with the last drop of their blood ! This should stagger your confidence. Myriads of the most learned and moral persons of all ranks and degrees, and of all sects and denominations, would this moment burn at a stake in confirmation of the truth of the Bible, and the divine mission of Jesus Christ. Are they all deceived? Are you the only wise men upon earth? And would you this moment burn at a stake in proof of Christ's being an impostor? Nothing, surely, but the most palpable demonstration in favour of Infidelity should suffer

* For the natural and philosophical arguments in favour of a future state see Bishop Butler's Analogy, part 1. Bishop Porteus has brought them into a very striking point of view in three discourses on the subject in the first volume of his Sermons. Dr. Craven, too, Professor of Arabic, and Master of St. John's College in Cambridge, has published eight discourses on the evidence of a future state of rewards and punishments, which are worth the attention of all who have any doubt.

you to sleep one night more in your present state of scepticism and unbelief. If you are mistaken, Sirs ! Should you be mistaken ! The very possibility is enough to overwhelm the human mind !

‘ My hopes and fears

‘ Start up alarm’d and o’er life’s narrow verge

‘ Look down—on what ? A fathomless abyss.—

‘ A dread eternity ! how surely mine !”

Everlasting existence in misery !—Under the frown and displeasure of the best Being in the universe, without end ! Debarred of light, and the society of happy spirits !—The associates of lost souls, and miserable angels, through endless ages !—The lake which burneth with fire and brimstone !—The worm that never dies !—The fire that never shall be quenched !—Everlasting punishment !—Eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power !

“ Ah ! could I (to use the words of a great author) represent to you the different states of good and bad men : could I give you the prospect which the blessed martyr St. Stephen had, and shew you the blessed Jesus at the right hand of God, surrounded with angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect ; could I open your ears to hear the never-ceasing hymns of praise, which the blessed above sing to Him that was, and is, and is to come ; to the Lamb that was slain, but liveth for ever ; could I leap you through the unbounded regions of eternal day, and shew the mutual and ever-blooming joys of saints who are at rest from their labours, and live for ever in the presence of God ? or could I change the scene, and unbar the iron gates of hell, and carry you, through solid darkness, to the fire that never goes out, and to the worm that never dies : could I shew you the apostate angels fast bound in eternal chains, or the souls of wicked men overwhelmed with torment and despair : could I open your ears to hear the deep itself groan with the continued cries of misery ; cries which can never reach the throne of mercy, but return in sad echoes, and add even to the very horrors of hell ! could I thus set before you the different ends of Religion and Infidelity, you would want no other proof to convince you, that nothing can recompense

the hazard men run of being for ever miserable through Unbelief."

We too well know you will make yourselves merry with these representations;* but you should not laugh where you ought to be serious; vaunt where you should tremble; or sneer where you should argue. In these respects you are unquestionably to blame. If any thing in nature is of importance, it is surely how we may "escape the death which never dies," and attain the end of our creation. Walsingham judged like a man of sense, when he said to the merry Courtiers laughing on every hand of him:—"Ah! while we laugh, all things are serious round about us; God is serious,

* When the Duke of Buckingham was once talking profanely before King Charles II. Edmund Waller, the Poet, reproved him very properly, by saying, "My Lord, I am a great deal older than your Grace, and, I believe, have heard more arguments for Atheism than ever your Grace did; but I have lived long enough to see there is nothing in them, and so I hope your Grace will."

We have an account in the Gentleman's Mag. for June 1798, of a Man of very distinguished talents, well known for the laxity of his principles, and the licentiousness of his conduct, who died in the course of last year at a very advanced age. He bore the advances of dissolution tolerably well, while death seemed at some distance; but when death drew near, his atheistic principles gave way, and he was afflicted with the most excruciating mental pangs. When he came to stand on the brink of eternity, all his resolution forsook him. Though free from pain, he became restless and disturbed. His last hours were spent in the agonies and horrors of remorse. He cried for mercy to that God, whom he had wantonly denied; and—there let him rest—till the day of account!

I could wish the deistical reader would turn to the seventh section of Dr. Priestley's Observations on the Increase of Infidelity, where he will find the spirit of Infidelity exemplified in the Correspondence between Voltaire and D'Alembert. The resolution of these two Deists was to live and die laughing. That they lived laughing is partly true; but how did these gentlemen die? The tune was changed!

This too was the case with the witty and facetious Thomas Brown, who used to treat Religion very lightly, and would often say, that he understood the world better, than to have the imputation of Righteousness laid to his charge. Nevertheless, upon the approach of death, his heart misgave him, and he began to express sentiments of remorse for his past life. Thus we see, however men may bully and defy the devil at coffee houses and taverns, they are all the while secretly afraid of him, and dare scarcely venture themselves alone in the dark, for fear he should surprize them with his cloven feet. See the Gen. Biog. Dictionary, article Brown.

who preserveth us, and hath patience towards us; Christ is serious, who shed his blood for us; the Holy Ghost is serious, when he striveth with us; the whole creation is serious in serving God and us; they are serious in hell and in heaven; how then can we laugh and be foolish?" We believe these denunciations of Scripture to be the words of eternal truth; and till you have demonstrated them to be certainly false, you are not wise to treat them with disregard.

"What none can prove a forg'ry, may be true;
What none but bad men wish exploded, must."

You know what pain of body is, and you are no stranger to a greater or less degree of uneasiness of mind. Experience, therefore, teaches us, that we are capable of such uncomfortable sensations. The goodness of God is not of that nature to prevent human misery. The present state largely abounds therewith. Now, as pain and misery are permitted here, it is not improbable but they will be the same in the future state of existence. When only your head, or tooth aches; when the gout, stone, or gravel, seize you; or when a burning fever makes your moisture like the drought in summer; do you then despise pain and anguish? We have been told, that when Mirabeau,* the elder, was seized

* Mirabeau has frequently been stiled an Infidel. I dare not, however, suppose that he was any other than a Christian, in the latter part of his time, though possibly of a peculiar cast. If one may judge from his speech pronounced in the National Assembly of France on the 14th of January 1791, concerning the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, he was certainly a believer in the Saviour of mankind, and a most powerful advocate for regenerated Christianity. It is probable, indeed, he would have carried it no further than a sort of pure system of moral philosophy.

Speaking of this extraordinary genius brings to my mind a remarkable Paper, which was published in the Complete Magazine for the month of October 1764, on the Causes of the Decline of the French Nation. The whole Paper is curious, but the latter part is so extremely applicable to the present state of Europe, that one can scarcely consider it as any other than prophecy. The close runs thus:

"The parliaments of France are obliged to conceal the strong spirit of liberty with which they are enflamed, under the mask of loyalty, and of attachment to the monarchy. They remonstrate with force and elevation against every measure which tends to the pre-

with his last illness, he found himself so distressed, that he desired his Physician to dispatch him by poison. His voice having failed him he wrote, "Would you think that the sensation of death proves so painful?" His speech having returned, he said, "My pains are insupportable. I have an age of strength, but not a moment of courage." A convulsion ensued. It was followed by a loud Scream—and he expired!

Thus, you see, how this famous French hero roared out under the anguish of his disorder. While he was in health he might, probably, be as full of courage as you now feel. When the hand of God comes to be upon the stoutest of us, we are soon taught, that all our boasted strength is perfect weakness, and all our vaunted courage perfect cowardice. We may be permitted for a time to carry on the war against God and his Christ; but it will not do. A sick bed, or a dying pillow, will, in all likelihood, bring us to our senses.*

judice of the provinces they protect. They can go no further; but they await the moment to strike the blow that shall lay the fabric of despotism in ruins. When this blow is struck, the effects of it will be equal to those of magic. The cottage will be put on a level with the palace; the peasant with the prince. Ranks shall be confounded; titles, distinctions, and birth, shall tumble into an undistinguished heap of confusion. A new moral creation shall strike the view of an admiring universe; and France, like old Rome, in her first flights to empire, shall appear with the sceptre of universal dominion bourgeoning in her hands. Out of universal confusion order shall arise: the Great of nature's creating will assume their places; and the Great by title and accident, will drop despised into the common mass of the people."

* A more extraordinary instance of impenitency I have not read, than that of a William Williams, who died in the parish of Tarrvin near Chester, in April 1791, and was buried at Great Acton Church, near Nantwich, by the Rev. Mr. Wilson. If my information be right, and I have no reason to call it in question, but from the horribleness of it, this unhappy man had been extremely wicked all his life. When he drew near his end, being about seventy years of age, he determined to make his will, and leave all he had from his wife and children, alledging that the latter were none of his. But though he bade fifty pounds as a reward, no persons could be found who would sign as witnesses. He desired, when he died, that a pair of clog shoes should be put into his coffin, that he might pound devils and damned souls with them in hell. Being reproved for his swearing and wickedness, he told those who reproved him, that he neither regarded them, nor their new God; he would

Or should these be so unfortunate as to fail, a day of judgment will assuredly do the business, which they had left undone.

“To die;—to sleep;
To sleep! perchance to dream! ay, there’s the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause.”

If man be a reasonable creature, there is a Hereafter. And if there be a Hereafter, it must be a state of retribution. A moral Governor must deal with moral agents according to their moral conduct. The perfection of his nature requires it. I swear by the ETERNAL, therefore, all the denunciations of Scripture shall have their accomplishment upon

curse and swear so long as he had breath.—He did so.—He ordered his body to be drawn in his own cart to be buried.—It was so.—He charged that five shillings should be spent at every public house on the road.—Some of it was so.—He desired he might be laid at the corner of the church-yard next the public house, that he might have the pleasure of hearing the company curse and swear.—He, moreover, requested, that every one of his companions would drink a health standing upon his grave after it was filled up.—They did so; and continued to drink and make merry over his grave, for near two hours after the interment.

This shews us there are cases to be met with of persons, who are so hardened in their sin, and so totally given up of God, that neither sickness nor death can make any impression upon them. I remember one of this unhappy description in the county of Essex, whom I both visited during his illness, and interred after he was dead. He was a clever fellow, and of a good family, but so totally depraved, that when one of his bottle companions wrote to inform him, that he was about to die and go to hell, and desired to know what place he should bespeak for him there, he sat down, and gave him for reply, that he did not care where it was, if there was only brandy and rum enough. Thus he lived—and, soon after this, died a martyr to spirituous liquors—cursing and blaspheming, notwithstanding all that could be done to bring him to a better mind.—Being possessed of two bank bills of the value of ten pounds each, which was all the little property he had left,—“Now,” said he, to a person who stood by, “when I have spent these in brandy and rum, I shall be contented to die and go to hell!” He sunk, however, before they were expended, and left just enough to bury him.

These are shocking instances of obduration, which seem to vie with Pharaoh himself, and ought to warn every man how he trifles with the convictions of his own mind, and causes the spirit of God to withdraw from him.

you, if you prevent it not by a compliance with the gracious and equitable demands of the Gospel.

It surely is a very astonishing consideration that a being such as man, placed on a small globe of earth in a little corner of the universe, cut off from all communication with the other systems, which are dispersed through the immensity of space, imprisoned as it were, on the spot where he happens to be born, almost utterly ignorant of the variety of spiritual existences, and greatly circumscribed in his knowledge of material things by their remoteness, magnitude, or minuteness, a stranger to the nature of the very pebbles on which he treads, unacquainted, or but very obscurely informed by his natural faculties of his condition after death; it is wonderful that a being, such as this, should reluctantly receive, or fastidiously reject the instruction of the Eternal God! Or, if this be saying too much, that he should hastily, and negligently, and triumphantly conclude, that the Supreme Being never had condescended to instruct the race of man. It might properly have been expected, that a rational being, so circumstanced, would have sedulously inquired into a subject of such vast importance; that he would not have suffered himself to have been diverted from the investigation, by the pursuits of wealth, or honour, or any temporal concern; much less by notions taken up without attention, arguments admitted without examination, or prejudices imbibed in early youth from the profane ridicule, and impious jestings of sensual or immoral men.*

It is customary with you Gentlemen, who reject the Scriptures, to consider every believer of them as weak and credulous.† I would recommend it to you, however, to suspend your censures, and to reconsider the matter before you form

* Bishop Watson's Collection of Theological Tracts, vol. i. p. 9. preface, from whence this paragraph is taken, with some trifling alteration.

† Let the most solid, rational, and inquisitive Deist, who is in pursuit of moral and religious truth, and wishes to have his mind satisfied in the great things which concern human happiness, have recourse to Dr. Samuel Clarke's Book on the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Religion; and then let him say, whether all who believe in the Saviour of the world, are weak and credulous persons. Perhaps a piece of more rational and conclusive argumentation was never presented to the consideration of mankind.

a final judgment. Do you seriously think then, that a man, who believes in God, that he is the Creator and Governour of the world, and a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him:—that a man who embraces the Gospel as a dispensation of mercy, and conducts himself according to the letter and spirit of it, is a weak and despicable character? Can you, in the sober fear of God, esteem all the great men among Christians to have been unreasonable and deluded persons? and that Thomas Paine and yourselves are the only men upon earth, who have found out the true wisdom? Is it probable, that men of your description, who, in general, have never turned your thoughts seriously and conscientiously that way, and who are neither more moral, more sensible, more learned, more philosophical, nor more inquisitive than large numbers of Christians are found to be, should have made the wonderful discovery, that Religion is all a cheat, and the Bible a ridiculous tale, trumped up by the Priests, to delude and amuse mankind, while many of our great philosophical characters of all professions make it the study of their lives to comply with the former, and spend a considerable proportion of their time in the investigation of the latter? And then, it is of no little importance to ask, Does your Unbelief make you more moral, pure, chaste, temperate, humble, modest, thankful, happy? Are You more amiable in your manners than we Christians usually are, better masters, servants, husbands, wives, children, friends, neighbours?

Besides, my Countrymen, (permit me to speak plainly,) are not you the most ungrateful of all human Beings, in that you have derived the whole of your present peculiar light, information, or philosophy (call it which you will) from the writings of the Old and New Testaments, and then make use of that light, information, or philosophy, to discredit those Writings, and to make them ridiculous among mankind? If we want to know what pure nature can teach, we must divest ourselves of all our present ideas, collected from the writings of the Sacred Code, and learn our religion from the Pagan page alone. The most eminent of them, however, saw and lamented their want of what you now so fastidiously reject.

“ Pure Plato ! how had thy chaste spirit hail’d
 A faith so fitted to thy moral sense !
 What hadst thou felt, to see the fair romance
 Of high imagination, the bright dream
 Of thy pure fancy more than realized !
 O sweet enthusiast ! thou hadst bless’d a scheme
 Fair, good, and perfect. How had thy wrapt soul
 Caught fire, and burnt with a diviner flame !
 For e’en thy fair idea ne’er conceived
 Such plenitude of love, such boundless bliss,
 As Deity made visible to sense.”

Should you not, as men of sense, review the history of the several ancient nations of the world, and compare their religion and morals with the religion and morals of your own country, where the Gospel has been preached for so many years? Common sense, and common equity seem to require this of you, before you commence apostates from that religion in which you have been educated. You will permit me here to call to your remembrance a few facts culled out of the history of mankind. Make what use of them you please. Only give them a patient consideration, and a fair comparison, with the religion of Jesus, as exhibited in the New Testament, and then act as you judge meet.

The Babylonians are said to have introduced the unnatural custom of human sacrifices. The Sepharvites, probably a branch of that people, burnt their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim, 2 Kings, xvii. 31.

Among the Phœnicians, a father did not scruple to immolate his only child: a husband to plunge his knife into a heart as dear to him as his own, to avert some public misfortune. Porphy. l. 2.

In Carthage, the children of the nobility were sacrificed to Saturn. The calamities, which Agathocles brought upon that city, were believed by the inhabitants to be a punishment for the substitution of ignoble blood; and, to appease the wrath of God, they immolated 200 children of noble blood in one sacrifice. Plut. de Superstit.—Diod. Sic. l. 20.

The ancient Germans also sacrificed human victims. Their priestesses opened the veins of the sufferers, and drew

omens from the rapidity of the stream of blood. *Tact. Germ.* 9.—*Diod. Sic.* 1. 5 20.

The ancient Britons likewise were equally cruel and superstitious.

The sacrifice of strangers and prisoners of war seems to have been general, even among the ancient nations which were more civilized.

Achilles, in Homer, immolates twelve Trojans to the manes of Patroclus. *Il.* 23. 175.

And even in the 532d year of Rome, two Greeks and two Gauls were buried alive in a public place of the city, to satisfy the superstitious prejudices of the populace. *Liv.* 1. 22. c. 57.

Though the Greeks do not appear to have offered human sacrifices, yet whole states were at times reduced to slavery, and their lands confiscated, and their prisoners of war massacred in cold blood.

Conjugal infidelity among the Athenians was become so common in the time of Pericles, that almost 5000 of their citizens were illegitimate. *Plut.* in *Pericl.*

If at any time a man became eminent among them for virtue, he was generally sentenced to some kind of punishment, either to imprisonment, banishment, or death.

Dark, however, as the picture of the Athenians is exhibited, it is sunshine when compared to that of the Lacedæmonians. See their history. By the laws of Sparta, a parent was permitted to destroy a weak or deformed child.

The Romans, though great and successful, were equally far from being a virtuous nation. They were the murderers and plunderers of the world. We might instance their whole history; but it will suffice to have observed, that the celebrated Julius Cæsar boasted he had taken 800 towns, vanquished 500 states, fought three millions of men, of whom one million had been either slaughtered or reduced to slavery.

The number of men slain at different periods, even for their diversion and entertainment, was immense.

A creditor could, at the expiration of thirty days, seize an insolvent debtor, who could not find bail, and keep him sixty days in chains. During this time, he was allowed to expose him three market days to public sale, for the amount

of his debt, and, at the expiration of a third, to put him to death. If there were many creditors, they were permitted to tear and divide his body among them. It was customary, however, to sell the debtor, and divide the money.

A father had the right of life and death over his children, and, by the laws of Rome, was permitted to expose his child to perish.

The husband was the only judge and arbiter of his wife's fate. If a wife was convicted of committing adultery, or of drinking wine, her husband had a right to put her to death without the formality of a public trial; while she was not permitted, on any provocation, to raise her finger against him.*

To these several facts, add a careful perusal of the first chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and then you will have had a view of the religion and morals of the Heathen world before the advent of Christ. If there be a difference between us and them, it is what the Gospel has made. The Heathens, indeed, excelled greatly in the arts and sciences. Excellence of composition may be produced from their writings, in rich abundance: but we call upon you to shew us any thing fit to be compared with various of the compositions contained in the Bible. You have no History so ancient, so important, so instructive, so entertaining, so well written;† no Poetry so sublime; no Elo-

* See a learned Sermon of Dr. Valpy, where these testimonies to the depraved state of the Heathen nations are detailed more at large.

† One of the finest and most important passages in all Heathen antiquity is that of Plato, where he introduces Socrates speaking of some divine teacher of whom he was in expectation, and of the mist which is naturally upon the mind of man, which was to be removed by that teacher. "He is one," says Socrates, "who has now a concern for us."—"He is a person that has a wonderful readiness and willingness to take away the mist from the mind of man, and to enable us to distinguish rightly between good and evil." See his second Alcibiades.

Bishop Hall says, "I durst appeal to the judgment of a carnal reader, (let him not be prejudiced) that there is no history so pleasant as the sacred: for should we even set aside the majesty of the Inditer, none can compare with it for magnificence, and the antiquity

quence so noble and persuasive; no Proverbs so laconic, so divine, so useful; no Morality so pure and perfective of human nature; no System of the intellectual world so rational. We challenge you, my Countrymen, we dare you to come forward, and shew us any thing of equal excellence in all the authors of antiquity, or among all the stores of modern refinement.* You ought then to be ashamed of your conduct in treating with such indignity and sovereign contempt, writings which were never excelled, never equalled; and which it is probable, you have never given yourselves time thoroughly to understand. Your conduct herein is extremely culpable, and what cannot be justified, either on the principles of religion or philosophy. Any man possessed of one grain of modesty, and gratitude to heaven, could not help seeing the impropriety of it. A timely attention to one of Solomon's jests† might do all such persons everlasting good:—Judgments are prepared for scorers, and stripes for the back of fools! "I can write," says Mr.

of the matter; the sweetness of compiling; and the strange variety of memorable occurrences."

"I am very confident," saith Sir Richard Steel, "whoever reads the Gospels, with a heart as much prepared in favour of them, as when he sits down to Virgil or Homer, will find no passage there which is not told with more natural force, than any Episode in either of those wits, who were the chief of mere mankind."

Mr. Locke somewhere observes, "that morality becomes a gentleman, not barely as a man, but in order to his business as a gentleman; and the morality of the Gospel," says he, "doth so excel that of all other books, that to give a man full knowledge of true morality, I should send him to no other book but the New Testament."

* If any person, who takes up this book, wishes to be informed where he may find the literary beauties of Holy Scripture pointed out to him, let him know, that Boyle on the Style of Scripture—Blackwall's Sacred Classics—and Bishop Lowth's Prælections, are all very valuable in this way.—Hervey's works contain many beautiful specimens of sacred criticism.—Smith's Longinus—Blair's Lectures—Rollin's Belles Lettres—Weald's Christian Orator—and the second volume of the Adventurer—all contain several good illustrations.—Some instances of the same kind will be met with in the Spectator and Guardian.—Many of these illustrations of the beauties of Scripture are collected into one view in the second vol. of Simpson's Sacred Literature.

† Thomas Paine, by way of shewing his wit, calls Solomon's Proverbs, a jest Book.

Paine, "a better book than the Bible myself." We grant this gentleman every merit to which he is entitled; but I cannot help recommending to his attention, and that of his friends, another of this Jewish king's witty sayings: Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him! Many other jests, uttered by this sagacious monarch, are equally funny with these two, and not less applicable to such characters as Mr. Paine, and our other vaunting Philosophisters; but these may suffice as a specimen. The reader might be abundantly gratified with others of a similar kind, by having recourse to the jest-book itself, to which I would, therefore, recommend him with all speed to apply. A serious application to a book of such admirable humour could not fail of yielding most exquisite entertainment! Let us, however, proceed to other considerations.

How different are the opinions of your Master Thomas Paine, and Sir William Jones,* concerning the Sacred

* Before this illustrious scholar went to India, he was by no means free from a sceptical bias. But when he resided in Asia, he investigated, with minute and rigid attention, all those intricate theological points which had occasioned his doubts; and the result was, not only his own most complete conviction, but the conviction of several eminent scholars, who, till then, had but slightly attended to the proofs for the verity of the Mosaic writings. These gentlemen, from that time, renounced their doubts and errors, and became, like Sir William himself, not only almost, but altogether Christians.

See this subject considered more at large in the *British Critic* for Feb. 1798.

The above declaration of this excellent man is said to have been written in one of the blank leaves of his common reading Bible. He has advanced the same sentiments more at large in the third volume of the *Asiatic Researches*, p. 402. "Theological inquiries," says he, "are no part of my present subject; but I cannot refrain from adding, that the collection of tracts, which we call from their excellence, The Scriptures, contain, independently of a divine origin, more true sublimity, more exquisite beauty, purer morality, more important history, and finer strains both of poetry and eloquence, than could be collected within the same compass from all other books that were ever composed in any age or in any idiom. The two parts of which the Scriptures consist, are connected by a chain of compositions, which bear no resemblance in form or style to any that can be produced from the stores of Grecian, Indian, Persian, or even Arabian, learning. The antiquity of those compositions no man doubts: and the unstained applica-

Writings? The former, who has betrayed the most palpable ignorance, says all manner of evil against them; while the latter, who was an all accomplished scholar, seems at a loss how sufficiently to express the sense he had of their importance. "I have regularly and attentively read the Holy Scriptures," says this great Lawyer, "and am of opinion this volume, independent of its divine origin, contains more sublimity and beauty, more pure morality, more important history, and finer strains of poetry and eloquence, than can be collected from all other books, in whatever language or age they may have been composed."

And is it not strange that these contemptible writers, as Thomas Paine affects to consider them, should excel all mankind in every sort of composition? They must have been extremely dexterous impostors! Christ, the most pious and moral of men, the most ingenious of deceivers! His Apostles, the most ignorant and illiterate of mortals, the wisest and most admirable of writers! What paradoxes a man must embrace before he can become a finished Infidel!

If then, my Countrymen, such are the superior excellencies of the Bible; though you find yourselves incapable of receiving it as composed by divine assistance for the instruction and salvation of mankind, you will do yourselves a very serious injury by exploding it in every other point of view. Read it, at least, if it is only as a collection of compositions more ancient, more curious, more excellent, more entertaining, and more important, than any other extant. This is a merit you must allow it to possess, if your mind be ever so little improved in literary attainments. And if this

tion of them to events long subsequent to their publication is a solid ground of belief, that they were genuine predictions, and consequently inspired."

Note, that the last hour of the life of this illustrious character (who was particularly eminent for his attainments in astronomy, chronology, antiquities, languages, music, botany, and the laws of England,) was marked by a solemn act of devotion. Finding his dissolution rapidly approaching, he desired his attendants to carry him into an inner apartment, where, at his desire, they left him. Returning after a short interval, they found him in a kneeling posture, with his hands clasped, and his eyes fixed towards heaven. As they were removing him, he expired.

See Maurice's elegiac Poem on the death of this admirable man.

be not your situation, you are ill qualified to judge of the truth or falsehood of a book of such vast antiquity, and which claims derivation from heaven. We have known several good scholars who used to read the Sacred Code, as we esteem it, merely as a book of entertainment. We have known others, who have read it to elevate their minds. Some read it for its history, some for its poetry, some for its eloquence, some for its morality, some for its maxims, some for its sublime views of the Supreme Being, some for the inimitable examples which it affords of virtue and vice. Be it then true or false, as a system of Divine Revelation, let it have its due praise, and hold the rank among books to which it is so justly entitled.* Give every author the honour due unto him, and sing with our Epic Bard :

“ Yet not the more
Cease I to wander, where the Muses haunt
Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill,
Smit with the love of sacred song ; but chief
Thee, Sion, and the flow’ry brooks beneath,
That wash thy hallow’d feet, and warbling flow,
Nightly I visit.”

This book, which you are unhappy enough to despise, abounds, we have already seen, with all the various beauties, of the Greek and Roman classics, and in a much higher degree of perfection. It consists, not merely of a collection of chapters, and verses, and distinct aphorisms on trivial subjects, as too many are apt to conceive ; but is, as it were, one grand Epic composition, forming sixty six books, of unequal lengths, and various importance. As the sun, moon, planets, and comets, make one system, and are each of them necessary to the harmony of the whole ; so the different books of the Sacred Code, though separately considered, and taken out of their connection, may appear unimportant ; yet as parts of one large and complicated system, they are all necessary, useful, or convenient to the perfection of the

*The beauties of composition to be met with in the Sacred Writings are beyond all praise. It is a neglect unpardonable in classical schools, that they are not read there, as the standard of good taste, and of fine writing, as well as of sound morals and religion.—If they abound with such numerous specimens of noble composition in the most literal of all translations, let any man judge what they must be in the original !

whole. And though the time be longer than is usually admitted in compositions of the Epic kind, its beginning being with the birth, and its end with the close of nature itself; yet it should be remembered, that even this circumstance is perfectly consistent with the rest of the adorable plan; a thousand years being with the Lord as one day, and one day as a thousand years. The Action of it too is one, entire, and the greatest that can be conceived. All the Beings in the universe, of which we have any knowledge, are conceived in the Drama. The design of it is to display the perfections of the adorable Creator; to rescue the human race from total misery and ruin; and to form us, by example, to glory, honour, and immortality. The Epic opens in a mild and calm sublimity, with the creation of the world itself. It is carried on with an astonishing variety of incidents, and unparalleled simplicity and majesty of language.* The least and most trivial episodes, or under actions, which are interwoven in it, are parts either necessary or convenient, to forward the main design: either so necessary, that without them the work must be imperfect, or so convenient, that no others can be imagined more suitable to the place in which they are. And it closes with a book, or, to keep up the figure, with a scene, the most solemn, majestic, and sublime, that ever was composed by any author, sacred or profane.†

“The human mind,” saith one of the best of judges, “can conceive nothing more elevated, more grand, more glowing, more beautiful, and more elegant, than what we meet with in the Sacred Writings of the Hebrew bards. The most ineffable sublimity of the subjects they treat upon is fully equalled by the energy of the language, and the dignity of the style. Some of these writings too, exceed in antiquity the fabulous ages of Greece, as much as in sublimity they are superior to

* One of the best judges of the age observes, that “the graceful negligence of nature pleases beyond the truest ornaments that art can devise. Indeed, they are then truest, when they approach the nearest to this negligence. To attain it, is the very triumph of art. The wise artist, therefore, always completes his studies in the great school of creation, where the forms of elegance lie scattered in an endless variety; and the writer who wishes to possess some portion of that sovereign excellence, and simplicity, even though he were an Infidel, would have recourse to the Scriptures, and make them his model.”

† See Dryden's *Essays on the Belles Lettres*.

the most finished productions of that celebrated people.* Moses, for instance, stands unrivalled by the best of them, both as a Poet, Orator, and Historian:† David as a Poet‡ and Musician: Solomon as a Moralist, Naturalist, and Pastoral writer: Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Nahum, Joel, and some other of the Minor Prophets, as Orators, and Poets, or both: Homer and Virgil must yield the palm to Job§ for true sublime: Isaiah excels all the world in almost every kind of composition:¶ the four Evangelists are eminent as Orators and Historians: St. Peter and St. James, St. Luke and St. John, as authors of no ordinary rank: and St. Paul as the most sublime of Writers and eloquent of Orators.** All these eulogiums upon the sacred penmen are spoken of them merely as Authors, without the least view to their higher order as inspired writers, and messengers of the Lord of Hosts.†† If this last consideration be taken into the account, and added to the former, what an all-important book must the Bible be? what a blessing to mankind! Language cannot express the value of it. If the exhortation of a late noble author, as improperly applied to the Grecian bard, were applied to this inestimable volume, it would be used with the strictest propriety and decorum!

* Lowth's *Prælectiones*.

† Longinus, the best critic of the Heathen world, speaks of Moses as no ordinary writer, and cites his account of the creation as an instance of the true sublime.

‡ Mr. Addison says, "After perusing the book of Psalms, let a judge of the beauties of poetry read a literal translation of Horace or Pindar, and he will find in these two last such an absurdity and confusion of style, with such a comparative poverty of imagination, as will make him sensible of the vast superiority of Scripture style."

§ The Rev. George Costard, famous for oriental learning, considers Job as an exalted and regular piece of eastern poetry, of the dramatic kind, consisting of five acts. The three first end at the 32d chapter; from the 32d to the 38th is the fourth act: from thence to the end is the fifth act.

¶ Let the reader consult Bishop Lowth's *Prælectiones* for the character of the several prophets of the Old Testament, where he will find much useful information.

** The above Longinus ranks Paul of Tarsus among the most famous orators.

†† Madame Dacier, the celebrated French Critic, in the Preface to her translation of Homer, assures us, that "the books of the Prophets and the Psalms even in the Vulgate, are full of such passages as the greatest poet in the world could not put into verse, without losing much of their majesty and pathos."

“Read God’s Word once, and you can read no more:
For all books else appear so mean, so poor,
Verse will seem prose, but still persist to read,
And God’s Word will be all the books you need.”

In short, my Countrymen, the Bible abounds with a vast variety of matter, a confused magnificence above all order; and is the fittest book in the world to be the standard of doctrines, and the model of good writing. We defy all the Sons of Infidelity to shew us any thing like it, or second to it. Where will you meet with such a number of instructive Proverbs—fervent Prayers—sublime Songs—beneficent Miracles—apposite Parables—infallible Prophecies*—affec-

* A valuable Correspondent, speaking of the prophetic Scriptures, expresses himself in the following manner:—“Next to Astronomy, few subjects expand the human mind more than the view which prophecy opens to us of the government of the Great King. To see the vast mass of materials, kingdoms, and centuries, in motion, only to the accomplishment of his purposes: to see refractory man employed to preserve the harmony of his designs: and the disorderly passions, while apparently working solely in their own narrow circle, ignorantly advancing the fulfilment of his determination! This is a study delightfully interesting, and which, in common with the contemplation of all the Great Creator’s doings, elevates the mind above the oppression of human cares and sorrows, and seems to leave her in that serenity of admiration, which one may imagine an imperfect foretaste of part of the employment and happiness of angels.”

Abraham Cowley tells us that “all the Books of the Bible are either already most admirable and exalted pieces of poetry, or are the best materials in the world for it.”

Sir Richard Blackmore says, that “for sense, and for noble and sublime thoughts, the poetical parts of Scripture have an infinite advantage over all others put together.”

Matthew Prior, Esq. is of opinion, that the writings of Solomon afford finer subjects for poems in every kind, than have yet appeared in the Greek, Latin, or any modern language.”

Alexander Pope, Esq. assures us, that “the pure and noble, the graceful and dignified simplicity of language, is no where in such perfection as in the Scripture and Homer; and that the whole book of Job, with regard both to sublimity of thought and morality, exceeds beyond all comparison the most noble parts of Homer.”

Mr. Nicholas Rowe, too, the Poet, after having read most of the Greek and Roman histories in their original languages, and most that are written in English, French, Italian, and Spanish, was fully persuaded of the truth of Revealed Religion, expressed it upon all occasions, took great delight in divinity and ecclesiastical history, and died at last like a Christian and Philosopher, with an absolute resignation to the will of God.

tionate Epistles—eloquent Orations—instructive Histories—
pure Laws—rich Promises—awful Denunciations—useful

There are few anecdotes of our celebrated English Poets which have given me more pleasure than that of poor Collins, who, in the latter part of his mortal career, “withdrew from study, and travelled with no other book than an English Testament, such as children carry to school. When a friend took it into his hand, out of curiosity to see what companion a Man of Letters had chosen—“I have only one book,” said Collins, “but that is the best.”—See Johnson’s *Lives of the Poets*, vol. iv.

I must own that such an anecdote as this knits my heart to Collins more than all the excellencies of his poetry. Sick and infirm, in the spirit of Mary, he sits at the divine Redcemer’s feet, listening to the words of eternal life. In such a state of body and mind, one single promise from his gracious and infallible lips, is of more real value and importance than all the pompous learning of the most celebrated Philosophers. This, indeed, will never be properly felt and understood till we come to be in similar circumstances. When Dr. Watts was almost worn out and broken down by his infirmities, he observed in conversation with a friend, “he remembered an aged minister used to say, that the most learned and knowing Christians, when they come to die, have only the same plain promises of the Gospel for their support, as the common and unlearned: and so, said he, I find it. It is the plain promises of the Gospel that are my support; and I bless God, they are plain promises, and do not require much labour and pains to understand them, for I can do nothing now, but look into my Bible for some promise to support me, and live upon that.”

This was likewise the case with the pious and excellent Mr. Hervey. He writes about two months before his death:—“I now spend,” says he, “almost my whole time, in reading and praying over the Bible.”—And again, near the same time to another friend:—“I am now reduced to a state of infant weakness, and given over by my physician.—My grand consolation is to meditate on Christ; and I am hourly repeating those heart-reviving lines of Dr. Young:

“This—only this subdues the fear of death:

And what is this?—Survey the wond’rous cure;

And at each step let higher wonders rise!

1. Pardon for infinite offence!—2. And pardon

Through means that speak its value infinite!—

3. A pardon bought with blood!—4. With blood divine!—

5. With blood divine of him I made my foe!

6. Persisted to provoke!—7. Though woo’d and aw’d,

Bless’d and chastis’d, a flagrant rebel still!—

8. A rebel ’midst the thunders of his throne;

9. Nor I alone!—10. A rebel universe!—

11. My species up in arms!—12. Not one exempt:—

Ensamples, as are set before us in this richly fraught magazine of all true excellence in matter and composition, the Holy Bible? We may say with Propertius, on another occasion,

Cedite, Romani scriptores; cedite Graii:*

And recommend to the Gentleman,† the Scholar, and the Philosopher, as well as to the illiterate Christian, the daily perusal of the Bible, with infinitely greater propriety, than ever Horace did to the learned Romans the study of the Grecian models.

Nocturna versate manu, versate diurna.‡

There is another circumstance, my Countrymen, I beg leave to submit to your consideration, which is, that though there are several of your unbelieving brethren, who are men of considerable natural abilities, of some learning, and of decent morals, yet there are not a few among you, as among us, who are profaned and debauched in no small degree; and who, therefore, are not capable of being reasoned with upon any religious topic whatever. These are a disgrace to any cause. And the more zealously they avow their party, the less honourable it is to that party. Such men are little raised above

13. Yet for the foulest of the foul he dies!

14. Most joy'd for the redeemed from deepest guilt!—

15. As if our race were held of highest rank;

And Godhead dearer, as more kind to man.”

We have just read Godwin's Memoirs of Mrs. Godwin, otherwise Miss Mary Wolstonecraft. She was a woman of considerable powers, but of a lewd character in life, living with a Mr. Inlay, as a wife, and having a child by him: and then when forsaken by him, living with and being pregnant by Mr. Godwin, who afterwards married her. I mention these circumstances, because they were both professed Philosophers and Unbelievers, and as a contrast to the above pious Christians. She attended no public worship, and during her last illness no religious expression escaped her philosophic lips.

* Let both the Greek and Roman authors yield the palm to the Sacred Writings.

† Dr. South observes, that, “he who would not read the Scripture for fear of spoiling his style, shewed himself as much a block-head as an atheist, and to have as small a gust of the elegancies of expression, as of the sacredness of the matter.” Sermons, vol. iv. p. 32.

‡ Read therein by day, meditate by night.

the brutes that perish, being earthly, sensual, devilish. Let them but eat, drink, sleep, and indulge the baser passions of the human frame, they ask no more, they look no higher.—To intellectual and refined enjoyments they are strangers. Of literary gratifications they know little. For moral and religious pleasures they have no taste. Immortal expectations, which exalt and ennoble the mind of man, they are willing to forego. The language of their sensual souls, which are brutalized with indulgence, is no other than that of the ancient Epicureans:—Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. And did they die to-morrow, the public would have no great loss of them: could they make good their hopes, that death is an eternal cessation from sensibility, they themselves would sustain no material inconvenience. The best they can expect is, to cease to be; a consummation, for such characters, devoutly to be wished!

These are the men, however, who make the greatest noise, and most violently oppose the Religion of the Son of God, and the Sacred Writings!*

It is an honour to that Religion, and these Writings, that such men are Infidels, and avow their unbelief in the face of the world! May every unreasonable and immoral man do the same!

After all, my Countrymen, if every thing besides in these papers shall be despised by you, let the several examples herein recorded have their due weight upon your minds. If there be importance in any thing, it is usually found in the sentiments and behaviour of men, when they draw near the close of their earthly existence.

“Men may live fools; but fools they cannot die.”

We may, indeed, be hardened in our sins, when that event

* It is calculated, that, when trade goes pretty well, there are, upon an average, 200,000 manufacturers in this country, who constantly spend their working hours in idleness, drinking, gambling and debauchery. This large body of men may likewise be considered as infidels in principle, atheists in practice, and ripe for any wicked and desperate enterprize which may arise. They are the curse and scum of the country: and yet they are usually excessively wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own conceit. All the world are fools besides themselves. They are great politicians, great philosophers, great divines—over their cups!—and wisdom shall die with them!

draws nigh. We may brave it out against death. We may set at defiance all the threats of heaven. But, usually, we discover certain symptoms, even here, of what our future destiny is like to be. Fear, horror, indifference, hope, trust, faith, reliance, joy, will all more or less prevail, according as the state of our minds shall be, in those solemn moments, when death is making his approach.* So it was in the seve-

* There is a very affecting narrative just published by a John Cooke, of Maidenhead, in Berks, entitled Reason paying homage to Revelation, in the Confession of a Deist at the gates of death. The gentleman in question was a very respectable person of the medical profession in that town, and died at the age of thirty-three. He was a man of pleasure, as far as business would permit; but his favourite amusement was the card-table, at which he spent much time, and would frequently say to Mr. Cooke, who seems to be a dissenting minister, "I am prodigiously fond of cards." While he was visiting one of his patients, he was suddenly taken ill. His conscience was alarmed. His deistical principles, of which he had long made his boast while in health, gave way. He lamented his sad condition in most affecting and pitiable accents. Among other things, he acknowledged with unutterable distress, his neglect of the Lord's day, and the public worship of God. When he was well, he could say, "he was easy without the Bible, he had no fears for his soul—he believed it would die with his body—and he was never disturbed about these things—he could read profane history with as much pleasure as another reads his Bible." But, when he was ill, and apprehended himself to be on the brink of the grave, he was thrown into such unutterable agony, as to be bereft, at times, of his reason. In the most bitter terms he bewailed his past folly—mourned over his lost opportunities—declared his full purpose, if restored, of attending to the great concerns of his soul—and solemnly warned his companions not to follow his example—and cried unto God for mercy. At length, after having lain for some time in a senseless state, he breathed out his soul with a dismal groan.

If Thomas Paine was as easy and confident in his deistical principles under the views of approaching dissolution, as he pretends, and, as I suppose, he really was, this is by no means a sure criterion of those principles being the only true ones. No man's private persuasion, or conviction, can be a sure test of truth. For we find men fully persuaded of the truth of their sentiments under the most various, and even contradictory opinions. The most, therefore, that can be inferred from a declaration of this nature, is, that Thomas Paine thought his opinions were according to truth, not that they really were so. Bolingbroke was an immoral man, and yet he too died a deist. Rousseau had been a wretch, and yet he died avowing his innocency even to the Almighty himself. Thomas Paine is by no means an excellent moral character, and yet he rejects every idea of a Saviour. What then? Shall their

tal cases we have recorded in these pages. And the time is not at any great distance when we too, must bear our final

self-righteous convictions be the standard of truth? If Thomas Paine had well read and considered Sterne's Sermons on the Abuses of Conscience in *Tristram Shandy*, he never would have produced his being easy in the views of apparent dissolution, as a proof that his deistical principles are founded in truth. Conscience may be lulled to rest by a vast multitude of soporifics. And there is such a thing too as having it seared as with a hot iron!

One of the most remarkable instances of the power of conscience, I recollect to have read, is related by Mr. Fordyce, in his *Dialogues on Education*, vol. ii. p. 401; and inserted in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. v. p. 1; and in the *Evang. Mag.* vol. vi. p. 327.

If dying with ease, and a conviction that our own religious principles are the only true ones, were a certain proof of truth, and that we are right, then would the most absurd and contradictory opinions be proved to be true. How many Christians of the most opposite sentiments depart this life, under the firmest persuasion of the truth of their principles, and the most confident assurance that they are going to eternal rest? Would Thomas Paine allow this to be a just proof, that their opinions are founded in truth? Besides, Spinoza, the Atheist, was both a much greater, and a much more moral man than Thomas Paine, and he died avowing his atheistic principles. Is this a proof that those principles are true? Shall we conclude there is no God, because a poor misguided man is mad enough to die in that persuasion? Because Bruno is such a fool to burn at a stake, in defence of the same atheistic principles, shall the whole deistic scheme be thereby subverted, and atheism considered as the only true doctrine? If this be conclusive reasoning, what becomes of Mr. Paine's boasted principles?

How different are men's convictions under the afflicting hand of God! Thomas Paine continues hardened, and resolves to die in his Infidelity. Casper Bartholin, the celebrated Danish Physician, when affliction was heavy upon him, made a vow and promise to Heaven, if he was restored to health, that he would give up his medical pursuits, and apply himself wholly to his religious concerns. He was restored, and kept the vow he had so solemnly made unto God. Thomas Paine is restored, and rages more than ever against the Lord and his Christ!

Priests, of every denomination, are objects of the highest possible contempt to all our deistical gentlemen. One of that fraternity who has since been taught the error of his ways, in a manner very much out of the common way, was known to declare, "He hoped to see the day when there would not be a priest—and that he would not believe the Christian religion while he had his senses."—Though then in a good state of health, within a couple of hours he became deranged, and soon after made various efforts to destroy himself, wishing to be in hell as soon as possible, that

testimony; when the scene of life shall close; and our eternal state commence. If so,

“Nothing is worth a thought beneath,
But how we may escape the death,
That never, never dies!
How make our own election sure,
And, when we fail on earth, secure
A mansion in the skies.”

If you are hardy enough to reject the scriptural representations of future misery, give credit, at least, to your own Bible, the writings of the most respectable of the **Heathen**. They had their Elysium and Tartarus as we our Heaven and Hell. Nor was there ever any religious institution, which held not out promises of reward to the obedient, and threatenings of punishment to the disobedient. Indeed, every government whether human or divine, must naturally and necessarily do it, or there is an end to all order. Every law must have its sanction. Accordingly, we find Homer, Plato, Virgil,* and others, have said every thing that is horrible concerning the future misery of lost souls. Our great English Dramatist, who has copied from their writings, shall speak their opinions;

“Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;
To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot;
This sensible warm motion to become
A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice;
To be imprison’d in the viewless winds,
And blown with restless violence round about
The pendent world; or to be worse than worst
Of those, that lawless and incertain thoughts
Imagine howling: ’Tis too horrible!
The weariest and most loathed worldly life,
That age, ache, penury, imprisonment,
Can lay on nature is a paradise
To what we fear of death.”

he might feel the worst of his case. Three physicians attended him for some time; and the rich promises of the Gospel being held out to him, he was at length restored to a sound mind, and is now a happy witness of the power of redeeming grace. *Vide* *Evang. Mag.* for Sept. 1798.

* The reader will find an account of the rewards of the righteous, and the punishments of the wicked, in Homer’s fourth and eleventh books of his *Odyssey*: in Plato’s *Phædon*, or Dialogue on the Immortality of the soul: and in the sixth book of Virgil’s *Æneid*.

If this, or any thing like this, is to be the future destiny of a certain class of our fellow-creatures, we shall gain little by rejecting the Gospel representations. We shall be extremely unwise to suffer our probationary period to pass away unimproved. If our race be indeed in a state of moral ruin; if the Almighty hath devised means for our recovery; if, among other messengers, he hath sent a person higher than the heavens to be our Redeemer;* we shall be strangely wanting to ourselves, if we treat this glorious person, and the doctrines of salvation which he hath taught, with neglect or contempt. At all events, therefore, let us examine well the ground upon which we stand. Negligence in such a cause, is nearly as culpable as contempt. And be it never forgotten, that, on every system, a strictly moral, and religious conduct, is the duty, the interest, the felicity of all reasonable Beings. What an idiot must that man be, who rejects his Saviour, his Bible, and all his immortal expectations, because of some chronological, or genealogical, or geographical difficulties in the records of his salvation, which he cannot reconcile to the full satisfaction of his mind? I had almost said, if the Bible were as full of blunders, contradictions, and absurdities, as the Koran of Mahomet, yet might Jesus be a prophet sent from God. The reality of his mission does by no means depend upon the validity of the Scriptures.† though the Scrip-

* For a very clear and satisfactory defence of the doctrine of redemption by Jesus Christ, see the first vol. of Bishop Porteus's Sermons, discourse the tenth, and vol. ii. discourses the second and third; and that he is the real and proper Son of God, see the 14th discourse of the same volume. The reader who remains unconvinced after considering the various arguments advanced by the above learned and amiable Prelate, will probably resist every thing that can be said by any other writer. If, however, he is desirous of seeing the matter fairly argued between Christianity and Deism, let him have recourse to a volume of Sermons preached at the Temple Church by Bishop Sherlock. I myself remember that this book convinced a determined Deist, who is now an eminent instrument in the hands of Providence for the conversion of others. I would, therefore, to all such, use the words of Augustine—*Tolle et lege; tolle et lege.*

† If we have any doubts concerning the truth of the Gospel of Christ, it would be but fair to examine carefully all the other religions that now are, or ever were, in the world, and compare them impartially—not with Christianity as established in the several countries of Europe—but—with the pure, unmix'd Gospel, as taught by our Saviour, and left on record in the New Testament, and then give the preference to that which is most excellent. If

tures are as genuine and authentic as if all depended upon them.

Be wise, therefore, my Countrymen, to know the time of your visitation. Make the most of your little span of life. Seek Truth with modesty and humility, with patience and perseverance, and follow wheresoever it leads the way. Take the safe side. Believe in Christ, if you can. Believe as far as you can. Examine every principle, step by step. And should the evidence for Infidelity fall ever so little short of demonstration, if you act a reasonable part, you will believe in Jesus, because infinite danger presses on that side, and no danger whatever on the side of faith and obedience. Submit then, to his easy and delightful yoke. His ways (make but fair trial of them) you will always find to be ways of pleasantness, and all his paths to be paths of peace.* In our opinion, and in the opinion of all wise and good men of every age and nation:

“’Tis Religion that must give
Sweetest pleasures while we live;
’Tis Religion must supply
Solid comfort when we die:
After death its joys shall be
Lasting as eternity.”†

the reader is disposed to make this survey, he will find some assistance in J. Stephens, Esq’s. book on the Principles of the Christian Religion, compared with those of all the other Religions and Systems of Philosophy, which have hitherto appeared in the world.

To the books in favour of Christianity, mentioned on a former page, may be added Dr. John Rogers’s eight Sermons on the Necessity of Divine Revelation; Dr. Conybeare’s Defence of Revealed Religion; Gastrel’s Certainty and Necessity of Religion in general, and his Certainty of the Christian Revelation.

* For a view of the pleasure and cheerfulness of the religion of Jesus, see Bishop Porteus’s Sermons, vol. ii. p. 1.

† Though Infidelity is making its way rapidly among the nations, and among all orders of men, yet is the cause of the Gospel by no means desperate. The Europeans in the East Indies are said to be almost universally Infidels. The state of France is too well known. The same spirit is running through America. Thomas Paine has sent over among them, it is said, 14,000 copies of his deistical publications. But though every possible effort is making to establish the reign of Infidelity, there are equal efforts at least, I think, making by good men of all denominations, for the propagation of evangelical truth. The conflict is severe. But it is easy to see how the contest will terminate. Let every man that is on the Lord’s side come for-

If, however, after your most serious and conscientious endeavours, you are not able to find satisfactory evidence, that

ward and avow himself a friend of the despised Nazarene, in opposition to all the powers of earth and hell. Curse ye Meroz, said the Angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof: because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty. When one considers the present situation of the great bulk of mankind, whose heart does not burn within him to contribute something towards evangelizing the nations? The inhabitants of the world are said to amount at this time, to about 731 millions: of whom 420 millions are Pagans; 130 millions Mahometans; 100 millions Catholics; 44 millions Protestants; 30 millions of the Greek and Armenian churches; and 7 millions Jews.

The Rev. Mr. Carey, late of Leicester, and now a Missionary among the Hindoos, says,

Europe contains.....	106,932,000
Asia.....	387,884,500
Africa.....	61,137,200
America.....	116,621,420

The World.....	732,575,120
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Guthrie makes the world to contain.....	953,000,000
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The medium number may be.....	800,000,000
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Christians.....	170,000,000
Jews.....	9,000,000
Mahometans.....	140,000,000
Pagans.....	481,000,000

Total	800,000,000
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Subdivisions among Christians may be thus:

Protestants.....	50,000,000
Greeks and Armenians.....	30,000,000
Catholics, &c.	90,000,000

Total	170,000,000
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Is not this view of things a loud call to the friends of the Gospel to use every possible mean to promote the spread of it among the nations!—If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed, is the language of inspiration. Are we in no danger then from that spirit of slumber which overspreads our minds? Ought not every man, who has any concern for his own future happiness, to lend a helping hand to promote the salvation of the many millions of souls, who now sit in darkness, and in the region and shadow of death? The Moravians, above all other people upon earth, have herein the greatest merit. That small, and, in some respects, obscure Sect, have done more to spread the honour of the Redeemer's name among barbarous nations,

Christ came from God; you must allow at least, with

than all the Protestants in Christendom. These worthy people began their missions in the year 1732, and have now, in different parts of the world, and those several of them the most unpropitious, no less than 26 Settlements. In these Settlements near 140 Missionaries are employed in superintending about 23,000 converts from the Heathens!

A Swedish mission was undertaken to the Susquehanna river in America in the year 1697, by three persons, but with little success.

The King of Denmark sent out two persons in the year 1705 to Tranquebar on the coast of Coromandel, which mission has been continued to the present time, with considerable advantage to the cause of Christ in that part of the world.

The Society for propagating the Gospel in foreign parts, and that for promoting Christian Knowledge in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, were both begun about the year 1701, and have both been extremely useful in spreading the knowledge of the Redeemer's name. America is particularly indebted to these two Societies.

The Society for promoting Christian Knowledge was begun in the year 1698, and has been carried forward with considerable spirit for near one whole century. At present they have six Missionaries in the East Indies, and one in the islands of Scilly. From these Missionaries some very pleasing accounts have been published in the several annual reports. The efforts of this honourable Society have been very considerable also in the distribution of Bibles and other religious books of various descriptions. The Bibles sent out the last three years averaged 5,228 each year: the New Testaments and Psalters 9,333, Common Prayers 9,738, other bound books 10,562, and small Tracts 69,754. A charity of a most extensive, valuable, and important nature! But, a principal object with this Society, is the education of poor children. And in this, as well as in the distribution of books, they excel any thing that ever was in the world. Let their annual meeting at St. Paul's bear witness. See the Reports for an account of their extraordinary exertions in the propagation of religious knowledge. See also the Report of the Foreign Bible Society for May 1808.

The Baptists in this country have lately sent out two persons to the East Indies, the fruit of whose labours begins to appear, though the mission is in its infancy. We are informed by them, that the Europeans in that country are very generally in a state of Infidelity. This confirms what has been said by the natives in broken English: "Christian religion—Devil religion! Christian much drunk—Christian much do wrong, much beat, much abuse others." The natives are apt to say in making their bargains—"What dost thou think me a Christian, that I would go about to deceive thee?"—"It is a sad sight," says one of the first Missionaries, "to behold a drunken Christian, and a sober Indian: a temperate Indian, and a Christian given up to his appetite: an Indian that is just in his dealings, and a Christian not so. O what a sad thing it is for Christians, to come short of Indians, even in

Rousseau, that he was an extraordinary man; one of the first

moralties ! to come short of those, who themselves believe, to come short of heaven !”

Considerable effects also may be expected to arise from the two Settlements on the coasts of Africa and New Holland. The expectation will appear rational, if we compare America two or three centuries ago, with what it is at the present period.

The Methodist connection, under the direction of the Rev. Dr. Coke, has been considerably successful in winning souls to Christ in the West Indies. In the year 1794, they had upwards of a dozen Preachers employed in the different islands, and near 8,000 Blacks in society, besides others of different descriptions.*

The Missionary Society in London have taken up the deplorable situation of the Heathen nations with great spirit; and present prospects are very promising. How far it may please the great Head of the Church to succeed their endeavours in behalf of the Heathen, remains yet to be proved.† But be this as it may, the persons concerned shall not lose their reward. The attempt is honourable. Every believer in Christ Jesus should throw his mite into one or other of these treasuries of heaven. More noble still, however, is he, who, laying aside all party prejudices, and narrow plans of human policy, contributes, according to his ability, to every scheme set on foot for the salvation of his fellow-creatures, and the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom. I cannot conceive how any man, who professes to believe in the name of Christ, can be at rest in his spirit, without making some effort to advance the honour of his name. It is a black mark upon him. Woe unto them that are at ease in Zion—that put far away the evil day—that lie upon beds of ivory, that stretch themselves upon their couches, that eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall—that chant to the sound of the viol—that drink wine in bowls—but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.

Thanks be to God, that though a spirit of Infidelity is rapidly spreading itself through the old rotten churches of Europe, yet there is a fire kindled in the hearts of thousands that shall never be extinguished, till all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. A missionary spirit is beginning to shew itself, all through England, Scotland, Ireland, Holland, Switzerland, Germany, and America, which shall finally diffuse it self through every nation under heaven.

* See the present state of this mission on a former page.

† It is a matter of great thankfulness, that after a voyage of more than 50,000 miles, accomplished in 21 months, Captain Wilson returned without the least material loss or injury to the ship *Duff*, in which he took out to the South Sea Islands about 30 Missionaries. When they arrived at Otaheite, they were received by the natives with reverence and delight. They had not one sick person on board : and now that they are returned, the crew of the ship is in better health than when they first embarked from England. All this hath God wrought in answer to prayer.

characters that ever appeared upon earth.* See then that you blaspheme not his name ; treat his cause and interest in the world with respect ; walk according to the best light you have ; be virtuous in your own way, and do all you can—not to make converts to Infidelity—(because when men commence Infidels, they usually become immoral)—but to lead your fellow-men into the paths of piety and virtue, under some denomination or other. If, indeed, you can fairly, by sound argument, and solid evidence, explode the divine authority of the Gospel, we are so far from being afraid of consequences that we call upon you to do it.† Try then what

Why do not our unbelieving countrymen form societies, and send out missionaries to convert the nations to pure Deism? If they are in earnest, and if they consider their principles as the only true and important ones, they certainly ought so to do, or else they fall under divine condemnation.

* Most of the French philosophers, those dabblers in science, allow that Jesus Christ was one of the greatest geniuses, and most extraordinary man that ever appeared upon earth. Others deny his very existence !

† Atheists and Unbelievers have more or less abounded in every age of the world. In Noah's time, the whole human race was gone astray. In the days of David, the fool said in his heart, There is no God. Scoffers too appeared in the age of the Apostles, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? I remember reading somewhere a story of a man in the last century, who was as great an enthusiast against the Bible as Thomas Paine himself. This clever fellow, either to display his wit, or his fanaticism, proceeded in the following truly curious manner :

In the year 1649, as a Mr. Fawcett was preaching in his church at Walton upon Thames, towards the close of the afternoon, six soldiers entered the church. One of them had a lantern in one hand, with a candle burning in it : In the other hand were four candles not lighted. When Mr. Fawcett had gone through the service of the day, and dismissed the congregation, this man called to the people to stay a little, for he had a message to them from God. Not being permitted to ascend the pulpit, or to address the people any farther in the church, he went into the yard, where the congregation collected around. He told them he had had a vision, and had received a command from God to deliver his will unto them ; and which they must receive upon pain of damnation. It consisted, he said, of five lights.

1. That the sabbath was abolished, as unnecessary and ceremonial.—And here, said the man, I should have put out my first light ; but the wind is so high I cannot kindle it.

2. Tythes are abolished, as Jewish. and a great burden to the

you can do. Exert all your talents. Call forth every latent power of the mind. Bring out your stores of ancient and modern lore. But—no ridicule! no laughter! no sneers! The occasion is too great and serious. Come forward, rather, in all the dignity of good sense, in all the majesty of conscious integrity, in all the zeal which the love of truth inspires, furnished with languages, knowledge, experience, observation, and either honourably overthrow the cause of the Gospel, which we assuredly deem the cause of truth; or, like Jenyngs and Pringle, openly acknowledge that you are convinced and conquered. This would be manly. This would be acting in a manner worthy the characters of lovers of truth. And on such men the God of truth himself would look down from heaven well pleased.

I have already called your attention, gentlemen, to a variety of characters from among the moderns, some good, others bad, some believers, others unbelievers. I would wish you, however, to take the Bible into your own hands, and read it carefully and coolly over, as a book of common his-

saints of God, and a discouragement of industry and tillage.—And here I should have put out my second light, &c.

3. Ministers are abolished, as antichristian, and of no further use, now that Christ himself descends into the hearts of his saints, and his Spirit enlightens them with revelations and inspirations.—And here I should have put out my third light, &c.

4. Magistrates are abolished, as useless, now that Christ himself is in purity of Spirit come among us, and has erected the kingdom of the saints upon earth. Besides, they are tyrants and oppressors of the liberty of the saints, and tie them to laws and ordinances, mere human inventions.—And here I should have put out my fourth light, &c.

5. Then, putting his hand in his pocket, and pulling out a little Bible, he shewed it open to the people, saying, “Here is a book^e you have all in great veneration, consisting of two parts, the Old and New Testament. I must tell you, it is abolished. It contains beggarly rudiments, milk for babes: but now Christ is in glory amongst us, and imparts a fuller measure of his Spirit to his saints than this can afford; and therefore I am commanded to burn it before your faces.”—So, taking the candle out of the lantern, he set fire to the leaves; and then, putting out the candle, he cried—“And here my fifth light is extinguished.”

This is not the only madman whom we have known to burn his Bible. There are many such now within 40 miles of this place.—One I have heard of, who, to be more witty than his sagacious brethren, roasted his Bible before a slow fire!

tory only, without any regard to its divine original ; and then endeavour to form an impartial judgment what course you ought to take, and what the event of your present conduct will be. To bring the matter to a short and easy issue, turn to the thirty-seventh psalm, read it seriously over half a dozen times, and consider well its contents. Do not be rash, foolish, headstrong, and reject this, and the other Sacred Records, without either rhyme or reason ; but be cool, deliberate, sober, well-advised, and determine to chuse the side of prudence, discretion, and safety. Let the several historical characters recorded in the Old and New Testament be taken into your most careful consideration, and judge calmly of their comparative respectability, and with whom you should like best to die. Whether had you rather wish to die and have your portion in eternity with Cain, Balaam, and Pharaoh ; with Korah, Dathan, and Abiram ; with Saul, Absalom, and Ahitophel ; with Herod, Judas, Pilate, and all such like characters ; or you would chuse to die and have your portion in eternity with Abel, Noah, and Lot ; with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph ; with Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Samuel ; with David, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah ; with Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel ; with John the Baptist, Jesus Christ ; the twelve Apostles, the seventy Disciples ; and all the other excellent men, whose names are recorded with approbation in the Jewish and Christian code ? Can you hesitate one moment which side you would wish to take ? Consider the matter well, and make your election.

But, if you do already see reason to believe in the Son of God ; or if at any future period you should find cause so to do, take heed that you do imbibe the true, noble, liberal, benevolent, spirit of the Gospel, in all its purity and extent.

Be not ashamed either of its doctrines or precepts. Its doctrines are oracles, its precepts are sanctioned with penalties of a nature the most tremendous that can be conceived. Hold fast the former then, regardless of the obloquy of self-righteous Moralists, in all their purity and extent. They form one grand, well-compacted system, far more glorious than the whole universe of visible created things. The heavens declare the glory of God, the wonderful variety of crea-

tures upon earth his wisdom, power, and goodness; but the scheme of saving a lost world, by the interposition of his Son, outshines all the other works of the Divine Being that have ever come within the ken of mortal creatures. God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who, being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. This is perfectly in the spirit of ancient prophecy: Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders; and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God: The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the encrease of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment, and with justice, from henceforth, even for ever. The beloved disciple of our Lord displays the original grandeur of this Mighty One more fully than the prophet: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.—And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. This amazing idea of the creating power of the Redeemer is still more expanded by the great apostles of the Gentiles: By him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.—He being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; and though he was God's Fellow, he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus

every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. So that, though we all* have sinned and

* It may be safely asserted, I apprehend, that all truly serious and religiously minded people are nearly of one opinion concerning the great doctrines of the Gospel. They live in the comfort and die in the faith of them. The Calvinist and Armenian here at least are of one mind. When the Rev. John Wesley came to die, his language was,

“I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me.”

“There is no way into the holiest, but by the blood of Jesus.”

“I’ll praise my Maker while I’ve breath, &c.” [*]

The late Mr. Toplady also appears to have been greatly supported with divine consolations during his last sickness. A few days before his death he said to a friend: “O, my dear Sir, it is impossible to describe how good God is to me. This afternoon I have enjoyed such a season, such sweet communion with God, and such delightful manifestations of his presence with, and love to my soul, that it is impossible for words or language to express them. I have had peace and joy unutterable.”

To another friend he said: “The comforts and manifestations of God’s love are so abundant, as to render my state and condition the most desirable in the world. I would not exchange my condition with any one upon earth.”

The same friend calling upon him a day or two before his death, he said, with hands clasped, and his eyes lifted up and starting with tears of the most evident joy: “O, my dear Sir, I cannot tell you the comforts I feel in my soul. They are past expression. The consolations of God to such an unworthy wretch are so abundant, that he leaves me nothing to pray for, but a continuance of them. I enjoy a heaven already in my soul. My prayers are all converted into praise.”

At another time he said: “O how this soul of mine longs to be gone! Like a bird imprisoned in a cage, it longs to take its flight. O that I had wings like a dove, then would I flee away to the realms of bliss, and be at rest for ever! O that some guardian angel might be commissioned; for I long to be absent from this body, and to be with my Lord for ever.”

At another time, and indeed for many days together he cried out “O what a day of sun shine has this been to me! I have not words to express it. It is unutterable. O, my friends, how good is God! Almost without interruption his presence has been with me.”

Near his end, waking from a slumber, he said: “O what delights! Who can fathom the joys of the third heaven?” And again, a little before his departure: “The sky is clear; there is no cloud; come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.”

[*] Mr. Wesley held the same doctrine for 50 years preceding his death.—*Editor.*

come short of the glory of God, we are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom

The learned reader will not be sorry to compare here the dying scenes of two or three of the German Christians with the above of Wesley and Toplady. Musculus's Soliloquy before death appears to me in the highest spirit of the Gospel of Christ.

“Nil superest vitæ; frigus præcordia captat:
 Sed tu Christe, mihi vita perennis ades.
 Quid trepidas, Anima? Ad sedes abitura quietis;
 En tibi ductor adest Angelus ille tuus.
 Linque domum hanc miseram, nunc in sua fata ruentem,
 Quam tibi fida Dei dextera restituet.
 Peccasti?—Scio; Sed Christus credentibus in se
 Peccata expurgat sanguine euncta suo.
 Horribilis mors est? Fateor: Sed proxima vita est,
 Ad quam te Christi gratia certa vocat.
 Præsto est de Satanæ. peccato, in morte triumphans
 Christus: Ad Hunc igitur læta alicrisque migra.”

Translated by Merricke.

My life decays, death's damps have seized my heart;
 But thou, O Christ, art more than life to me.
 Why tremblest thou, my soul? To rest depart,
 Behold thy guardian angel waits for thee.

This wretched tenement dissolving, leave,
 Which God's own hand will faithfully restore.
 Thy sins are many; but on Christ believe,
 And all thy sins his blood will cover o'er.

Is death terrific? Yes; but life is near:
 To this the gracious words of Christ invite,
 He conquers death, sin, satan; banish fear,
 To his dear presence take thy joyful flight.

Theodore Zuinger, a famous German physician, when he lay upon his death-bed, took his leave of the world in the following fine copy of verses, which is a liberal paraphrase of the 122d psalm.

“O lux candida, lux mihi
 Læti conscia transitus!
 Per Christi meritum patet
 Vitæ porta beatæ.
 Me status revocat dies
 Augustam Domini ad domum:
 Jam sacra ætherii premam
 Lætus limina templi.

Jam visam Solymæ edita
 Coclo culmina, et ædium
 Lætus angelicos, suo et
 Augustam populo urbem:
 Urbem, quam procul infimis
 Terræ finibus exciti
 Petunt Christiadæ, ut Deum
 Laudeat voce perenni-

God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God—to declare his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus Christ, being the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. These things being laid together, and duly considered, may we not exclaim with the same devout and admiring Apostle? Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

Such are the doctrines of Christ, of which the Apostle declares he was not ashamed, and of which no Christian ought or need to be ashamed; because they are the power of God unto salvation unto every one that believeth in his name. And we may say of them what St. Paul says upon another occasion, Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so now I say again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. Harsh as these words may seem, they were written in all the plenitude of apostolical authority, and apply to every case where the essential doctrines of the Sacred Writings are concerned. What those doctrines are may not be expedient for me here to say; the Scriptures are in every one's hands, and no man need continue in ignorance of what the Lord God requires of him.

Jussam cœlitus oppidis
Urbem jus dare ceteris,
Et sedem fore Davidis
Cuncta in sæcla beati.
Mater nobilis urbium!
Semper te bona pax amat:
Et te semper amantibus
Cedunt omnia recte.

Semper pax tua mœnia
Colit; semper in atriis
Tuis copia dextera
Larga munera fundit.
Dulcis Christiadam domus,
Civem adscribe novitum;
Sola comitata Caritas
Spesque Fidesque valete."

How different is the spirit of these dying scenes from those of our modern Philosophers, who usually depart from this life like the Emperor Adrian, or in a manner much inferior:

"Animula vagula, blandula,
Hospes, comesque corporis,
Quæ nunc abibis in loca
Pallidula, rigida nudula;
Nec, ut soles, dabis jocos?"

And then, as to the precepts of the Redeemer's religion, they are such as have been admired in all ages, and, as no man need feel himself ashamed to own. The substance of them is: Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: A precept so held in admiration by one of the Roman emperors, that he had it inscribed in various public places to be seen and read of all men. This excellent laconic sentence is more expanded by our Lord himself in another place: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind. And thy neighbour as thyself: and still more by St. Paul: The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men; teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godlily in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself, a peculiar people, zealous of good works. May I not then exhort you, my serious readers, in the words of the same Apostle, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service? and not to be conformed to this world: but to be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God? Endeavour to be uniformly and conscientiously, inwardly and outwardly, religious.* Lay

* There is need, in this time of general discontent, to call the attention of all good men to the obligations we are under, to be dutiful and loyal subjects. The Scripture is decisive, that as we are to fear God, so we are to honour the King. But, setting duty aside, self-interest, if duly consulted, would induce every man to obey the civil government of the happy country in which we live. We have much to lose, little to gain, by any change that might take place. The ruin brought upon France may satisfy any man, how dangerous a thing it is to embark in public contentions, and disturb the regular order of things. If the experience of our neighbours will not determine us to peaceable and temperate measures among ourselves, we should do well to look back to the reign of the first Charles, when the three kingdoms were convulsed for seven years together, from one end to the another. Besides the many thousands of private men who fell in the bloody fray, the many millions of money that were spent, and the numerous families that were ruined, there were slain 17 earls and lords—45 knights and baronets—55 colonels—12 lieutenant colonels—53 majors—138 cap-

aside, as much as may be, all other thoughts and concerns, and let the pardon of your sins, the justification of your persons, the purification of your natures, and the salvation of your souls, be the grand business and aim of your life. Every thing within you, and every thing without you, will oppose this grand regenerating process of religion. Remember, however, this is your main concern in the world. One thing alone is truly needful. Secure this, and every thing beside is safe.

“This done, the poorest can no wants endure;

“And this not done, the richest must be poor.”

Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but that meat which endureth unto everlasting life.—Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all necessary things shall be added unto you. If you are ever so rich, great, wise, learned, honourable; if you are not at the same time experimentally religious, you are a miserable man. Do you want proof of this? Look inward, and look forward to the close of life; or turn back, and impartially consider the experience of the several persons, whose declarations we have recorded in the beginning of this Treatise. Compare them, weigh them, discriminate their characters; reject what is base and unworthy your attention, take alarm at the warnings of the dying penitents, and resolve, by the grace of God, to have a name and a place among his people. Let others despise and neglect the Sacred Writings, as their humour shall lead, do you be much in the perusal of them. Let them dwell in you richly. They will

tains—30 gentlemen volunteers—with about 30 others, who were either beheaded or died in prison.—The spirit of the times was much the same as hath for these several years prevailed in France; nor were the clergy treated with much more humanity, 8 or 10,000 of them being turned out of their livings. See Walker's *Sufferings of the Clergy*, p. 198—200. And if any convulsion should take place again in this country, I do not conceive that we should be much more humane towards each other, than people have been in cases of a similar nature. He was no inexperienced man who said—The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water; therefore leave off contention before it be meddled with.

When the Almighty intends to punish us effectually, he will deprive us of wisdom, and set us at loggerheads one with another. The consequence will be ruin to the present race of Englishmen. If with the above two dreadful examples before us, we suffer a party spirit to drive us to extremities, we shall deserve all we can suffer. See the seventh chapter of Ezekiel. Were we united and religious we might defy the whole world.

make you happy in your own soul, and wise unto salvation. Search them, dig in them, scrutinize them, let your daily delight be in them. It is the engrafted Word, and the Word of God's grace alone, which is able to build us up in faith and love, and save our souls alive. Read it, therefore, as the Word of God. Read it with religious views. Read it with constant prayer to Heaven for divine illumination; and, as often as convenient, get upon your knees in secret* with the Bible spread before you, and, be assured, you shall experience sublime and ravishing delights, to which the most happy and prosperous worldly men are utter strangers, and of which you yourselves can have no proper conception, till you have made the experiment. Could I be the happy instrument of inducing you to make the experiment, you would bless me for ever. And you will give me leave to say that if you could speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and possessed all knowledge human and divine; if you could perform wonders like Moses, celebrate the praises of God like David, prophesy like Isaiah, write like Paul, preach like Peter, thunder like James and John, and offer up your souls on racks and in flames like the Maccabean mother and her seven noble sons; if you had power with God like Jacob, and had the valour of Joshua, the strength of Samson, the beauty of Absalom, the wisdom of Solomon, the zeal of Phinehas, with every other qualification natural and acquired, that ever centered in any of the sons of men; yet, without a close, intimate, experimental acquaintance with the Sacred Oracles, and the great truths therein contained, all will avail nothing; you can neither enjoy true consolation in your spirit now, nor be capable of felicity hereafter when you die. Were I, therefore, permitted to give my last dying† advice to the

* M. De Renté, a French nobleman, used to read three chapters a day with his head uncovered, and on his bended knees; and this is the practice likewise of abundance of religious characters in the present day.

† The famous Sir Philip Sidney, taking leave of his brother Robert, when he died of the wound he had received in the field of battle, said, "Love my memory; cherish my friends;—but above all, govern your will and affections by the will and word of your Creator; in me beholding the end of this world, with all her vanities."

Sir Christopher Hatton, in like manner, a celebrated statesman,

dearest friend I have in the world, it would be the same which Dr. Johnson gave to his friend Sir Joshua Reynolds—Read your Bible:* I only should add as above—Read it daily upon

a little before his death, advised his relations to be serious in searching after the will of God in his holy word: “for,” said he, “it is deservedly accounted a piece of excellent knowledge to understand the laws of the land, and the customs of a man’s country; how much more to know the statutes of heaven, and the laws of eternity, those immutable and eternal laws of justice and righteousness! To know the will and pleasure of the great Monarch, and universal King! I have seen an end of all perfection, but the commandments of God are exceeding broad.”

* This great man himself read the Bible too little, and other books too much. This, and associating frequently with men of little or no religion, were the main causes of his great leanness of soul, and fear of death all through life. He was, indeed, an extraordinary man, and an admirable judge of good writing. In the second volume of his *lives of the Poets*, p. 110, he speaks of Dryden’s *Dialogue of the Drama*, as one of the finest prose compositions in the English language: and at the 152d page of the same volume he says, Dryden’s *Poem on the death of Mrs. Killigrew*, is the noblest Ode our language has ever produced. In the third volume, p. 62, he tells us the most poetical paragraph in the whole mass of English poetry is in Congreve’s *Mourning Bride*. And in the fourth volume, p. 181, he declares one of the finest similes in all the English poetry, is that of the Student’s progress in the sciences in Pope’s *Essay on Criticism*, lines 215—232.

The more religious people read the Sacred Writings, and the less in general, they trouble themselves with the compositions of men, the better. If, however, the reader wishes to know what books are best calculated to advance the spirit of religion in the soul, the following have been found singularly useful; Scougal’s *Life of God in the soul of man*—Baxter’s *Saint’s Everlasting Rest*—Doddridge’s *Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*—Watts on the *Love of God*—Rowe’s *Devout Exercises of the Heart*—Young’s *Night Thoughts*—Milton’s *Paradise Lost and Regained*—Law’s *Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*—and Thomas A. Kempis on the *Imitation of Jesus Christ*.—Kempis, in particular, was a great favorite with Archbishop Leighton and Bishop Burnet. And Law’s *Serious Call* has the honour of being the means of the conversion of that hercules in literature, the late Dr. Johnson; which book he used, therefore, much to commend, saying, “It was the finest piece of hortatory theology in any language.”—See Boswell’s *Life*, vol. 1. pp. 29, 341.—This book has, moreover, extorted the following eulogium even from the sceptical Edward Gibbon, Esq. one of the first historians of the present age, and an unquestionable judge of literary merit.

“Mr. Law’s master-work, the *Serious Call*, is still read as a popular and powerful book of devotion. His precepts are rigid

your knees with fervent prayer for divine illumination; and rest not, till you have imbibed the spirit of it into the very frame and constitution of your soul and transcribed the precepts and example of Jesus into every part of your daily deportment in life.

This should be the last dying advice, I say, which I would give to the tenderest friend I have upon earth. And, if I should have no other opportunity permitted me, I here leave it on record, in direct opposition to the obloquy of the irreligious, and unbelieving world, as a legacy to my friends and the people among whom I have gone preaching the Gospel, of more real intrinsic value than thousands of gold and silver. Read your Bibles, and read till you love to read. Pray daily over

but they are founded on the Gospel: his satire is sharp, but it is drawn from the knowledge of human life; and many of his portraits are not unworthy of the pen of La Bruyere. If he finds a spark of piety in his reader's mind, he will soon kindle it to a flame; and a philosopher must allow, that he exposes, with equal severity and truth, the strange contradiction between the faith and practice of the Christian world. Under the names of Flavia and Miranda he has admirably described my two aunts—the Heathen and the Christian sister."

Memoirs of Gibbon's Life and Writings.

This, I think, is no common praise!

To the above books should be added Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*; Bishop Taylor's *Holy Living and Dying*; Archbishop Leighton's *Works*; and such other writings as are of a lively and evangelic nature. I remember, near thirty years ago, hearing the late excellent Dr. Conyers, of Deptford, say, that if he were banished into a desert island, and permitted to take with him only four books, the life of Mr. Haliburton should be one of the four.

This useful life is also the book which that great scholar, Sir Richard Ellys, valued above all the books in his learned and copious library.

With respect to the leading and most important doctrines of the Gospel, I do not know that they are any where more plainly and faithfully expounded than in the book of Homilies. I have been of this opinion many years, and still continue the same, making allowance for the language, and certain circumstances peculiar to the times in which they were written. In this opinion I find myself confirmed by Bishop Horsley, who says to the Clergy in his charge for 1790—"These discourses," some of the Homilies, "I would earnestly recommend to your frequent study, as an unexceptionable summary of doctrine upon these important points, and an excellent model of composition for popular instruction.

them, and pray till you love to pray. When the Scriptures and Prayer become delightful, and the time therein seems soon expired, then may you humbly suppose you have made some proficiency in the divine life. But, if you can spend whole days together, without refreshing your soul with some portion of the Holy Writings; if you feel yourselves cold, remiss, and negligent in private prayer; or if, when you read the Scriptures, and retire for devotion, you have little or no taste for the heavenly employ, but it appears irksome and disagreeable, and the time spent therein tedious and wearisome, you may be assured, let your professions be what they may, and the sermons you hear ever so numerous, or ever so excellent, your soul is either wholly dead to things divine, or you are in a backsliding and dangerous condition.

If you have never been accustomed to this religious exercise, it is extremely probable, you will, for a time, find much reluctance to it, a grievous struggle under it, and great unprofitableness in it. Be not, however, discouraged: but proceed in the divine employ till you have conquered every difficulty.* And remember, these are difficulties that are common to man: that have been vanquished by multitudes in every age of the church; and that must be overcome by you. Your present comfort, as well as everlasting welfare depend upon the victory. For your encouragement. call to mind the saying of Pythagoras, the ancient philosopher:

“Let the best course of life your choice invite,
For custom soon will turn it to delight:”

And the similar sentiment of Hesiod, the old poet: “The gods have placed labour before virtue; the way to her is at first rough and difficult, but grows more smooth and easy the further you advance in it.” Infinitely more encouraging and authoritative still is the language of the apostle: Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Various instances might be produced of persons who, when they approached the close of life, bitterly lamented their neglect of the Sacred Volume.† And numerous are the examples of

* See a fine paper on this subject in the Spectator, No. 447.

† See the cases of Salmasius, Hervey, and others, on the foregoing pages.

persons in all ages, who have spent much of their time in perusing that most unparalleled book. Moses, Isaiah, and Malach,* enjoin it upon all the Jews, young and old. God himself commands the duty to Joshua. It was the constant practice of David† through life. And there is reason to suppose that Jesus Christ spent most of his leisure in this manner. Our great Epic bard hath represented him as saying:

“When I was yet a child, no childish play
To me was pleasing; all my mind was set
Serious to learn and know, and thence to do
What might be public good; myself I thought
Born to that end, born to promote all truth,
All righteous things: therefore above my years
The law of God I read, and found it sweet,
Made it my whole delight, and in it grew
To such perfection, that ere my age
Had measur’d twice six years, at our great feast
I went into the temple, there to hear
The teachers of our law, and to propose
What might improve their knowledge or my own;
And was admir’d by all.”‡

Both Christ and his disciple St. Paul recommend the employ to every Christian. Timothy was trained from his childhood in this way. And the Bereans are spoken of as being more noble than others, because they searched the Scriptures daily. The primitive Christians were intimately acquainted with the Sacred writings, and generally carried a Bible about them, making it their companion wherever they went. And such was their affection for it, that many of them have been found buried with the Gospel lying on their breasts. Women wore it hanging at their necks. Children were trained up from their infancy to repeat it by heart; some of whom made surprising proficiency.

“Instead of gems and silks,” says St. Jerome to Læta, “let your young daughter be enamoured with the Holy Scriptures; wherein not gold, nor skins, or Babylonian embroideries, but a correct and beautiful variety producing faith, will recommend itself. Let her first learn the Psalter, and be entertained with those songs, then be instructed into life by the Proverbs of Solomon. Let her learn from Ecclesiastes to de-

* Deut. vi. 6—9; Is. viii. 20; and Mal. iv. 4.

† Psalm i. xix. cxix.

‡ Milton's *Paradise Regained*, b. 1.

spise worldly things; transcribe from Job the practice of patience and virtue. Let her pass then to the Gospels, and never let them be out of her hands; and then imbibe with all the faculties of her mind the Acts of the Apostles and Epistles. When she has enriched the storehouse of her breast with these treasures, let her learn the Prophets, the Pentateuch, or books of Moses,* Joshua and Judges, the books of Kings, and Chronicles, the volumes of Ezra and Esther, and, lastly, the Canticles.—The book of Revelation† has as many mysteries as words; I said too little; in every word there is a variety of senses, and the excellency of the book is above all praise.”

The monks of Egypt daily learned some portion of Scripture, and more especially made it their meditation on the Lord's day; insomuch that many of them became so expert and well versed in the Holy Scripture, that they could repeat it by heart; which is particularly noted of Hilarion, Ammoninus, Marcus Junior, Eros, Serapion, Solomon, and others. And by this means they were qualified to entertain their souls with spiritual exercises, singing of David's Psalms, and repeating other parts of Scripture, even at their bodily labours.—At Christ's little village of Bethlehem there

* Mr. Pope, whom we have before quoted on the subject of the Sacred Writings, and whose judgment few will call in question, in comparing the discovery of Ulysses to Telemachus, with Joseph's discovery of himself to his brethren, says, “It must be owned that Homer falls infinitely short of Moses: he must be a very wicked man, who can read the history of Joseph without the utmost touches of compassion and transport. There is a majestic simplicity in the whole relation, and such an affecting portrait of human nature, that it overwhelms us with vicissitudes of joy and sorrow. This is a pregnant instance how much the best of Heathen writers is inferior to the divine historian upon a parallel subject, where the two authors endeavour to move the softer passions. The same may, with equal truth, be said in respect to sublimity; not only in the instance produced by Longinus, viz.—Let there be light, and there was light; let the earth be made, and the earth was made;—but in general, in the more elevated parts of Scripture, and particularly in the whole book of Job, which, with regard both to sublimity of thought and morality, exceeds beyond all comparison the most noble parts of Homer.”

Notes on the sixteenth Odyssey.

† See the Strictures on this book in the 24—34 sections of Simpson's Key to the Prophecies.

was nothing to be heard but psalms; one could not go into the field, but he should hear the plowman singing his hallelujahs, the sweating mower solacing himself with hymns, and the vine-dresser tuning David's psalms. Thus the ancient Monks joined their bodily and spiritual exercises together, and made their common labour become acts of devotion to God. Their times of eating and refreshment were managed after the same manner. In some places they had the Scriptures read at table. At other places, when supper was ended, they sung a hymn and so returned to their cells. Thus their ordinary refreshments were sanctified with the word of God and prayer.—It is very observable, that in the primitive church not only men and women, but children were encouraged and trained up from their infancy to the reading of the Holy Scriptures. Of this we have undoubted evidence from many eminent instances of their practice. Eusebius remarks of the great care of Leonides, the martyr, and father of Origen, in the education of his son, that he made him learn the Scriptures, before he set him to the study of the liberal arts and polite learning. And Socrates makes the like observation upon the education of Eusebius, surnamed Emisenus, who was born of noble parentage at Edessa, a city of Osroene in Mesopotamia, that he was first taught the Holy Scriptures from his infancy, and then human learning. And Sozomen, in relating the same story, says; this was done according to the custom of the country; which shews, that it was no singular instance, but a general practice to bring children up from their infancy to the use of the Holy Scriptures. Gregory Nyssene notes it in the life of his sister Macrina, that the first part of her instruction in her infancy was to be taught the easy portions of Scripture, which were most suitable to her age. He says also, she did the same for her younger brother Peter, taking him from his mother's breasts, and instructing him in the Scriptures, that he might have no time to spend upon vain studies. It is noted by Sozomen and Palladius of Marcus, the hermit, that he was so expert in the Scriptures when he was but a youth, that he could repeat all the Old and New Testament without book. Such was the advantage which some hearers in those days reaped from the benefit of having the Scriptures read, that it is very remarkable what is related of one or two of them;

that being men of good memories, they got the Scriptures by heart, without any knowledge of letters, only by hearing them constantly read in the church or elsewhere. St. Austin remarks this of St. Anthony, the famous Egyptian monk; that without being able to read himself, he made such a proficiency in the knowledge of the Scriptures, as both by hearing them read, to be able to repeat them, and by his own prudent meditation to understand them. And Gregory the Great gives a like instance in one Servulus, a poor man at Rome, who though he knew not a letter in the book, yet purchasing a Bible, and entertaining religious men, he prevailed with them to read it continually to him, by which means he perfectly learned the Holy Scriptures. It is yet a more astonishing instance, which Eusebius gives in one of the Martyrs of Palestine, a blind man, called John, who had so happy a memory, that he could repeat any part of the Bible as readily as others could read it. And he sometimes supplied the office of reader in the church; and he did this to so great perfection, that Eusebius says, when he first heard him, he was perfectly amazed, and thought he had heard one reading out of a book, till he came a little more curiously to examine him, and found that he did it only by the eyes of his understanding, having the Scriptures written not in books or tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart. There are many such like instances in ancient history.*

* At the time of the Reformation also, after the Bible had been buried under the rubbish of human ordinances for many ages, the people in this country were extremely eager to read and hear the Holy Scriptures. They were received with inexpressible joy. Bishop Ridley and others could repeat large parts of them without book. The learned Joshua Barnes sometime afterwards, is said to have read a small pocket Bible, which he usually carried about him, a hundred and twenty times over, at leisure hours. Beza, at upwards of eighty years of age, could repeat the whole of St. Paul's Epistles, in the original Greek, and all the Psalms in Hebrew.

Lord Cromwell, Earl of Essex, in a journey to and from Rome, learned the whole of the New Testament by heart.—The excellently learned Lady Jane Grey, though executed at the age of sixteen, the night before she died, bequeathed

* See Bingham's *Antiquities of the Christian Church*

to her sister a Greek Testament, on one of the blank leaves of which she wrote:—"I have sent you, my dear sister, a book, which, although it be not outwardly trimmed with gold, yet inwardly it is more worth than all the precious mines, of which the vast world can boast. It is the book, my only best and best beloved sister, of the law of the Lord. It is the testament and last will which he bequeathed unto us wretched sinners, which shall lead you to the path of eternal joy.—It will teach you how to live, and likewise how to die.—If you apply yourself diligently to this book, seeking to direct your life according to the rule of the same, it shall win you more, and endow you with greater felicity, than the possession of all your father's lands, and you shall be an inheritor of such riches, as neither the covetous shall withdraw from you, nor the thief shall steal, nor yet the moths corrupt."

Queen Elizabeth, speaking of her own conduct, saith "I walk many times in the pleasant fields of the Holy Scriptures, where I pluck up the goodly herbs of sentences by pruning; and lay them up at length in the high seat of memory by gathering them together; that so, having tasted their sweetness, I may the less perceive the bitterness of this miserable life."

Alphonso, king of Naples, who did not begin to study till he was fifty years of age, read over the Old and New Testament, with their glosses, fourteen times.

Grotius too made the Holy Scriptures his favourite study in every period of his life. They were his consolation in prison; he always devoted a part of the day to them; and they were his principal study during a great part of his embassy abroad.

The learned father Paul had read over the Greek Testament with so much exactness, that having used to mark every word, when he had fully weighed the importance of it, as he went through it; he had, by going often over it, and observing what he had passed by in a former reading, grown up to that at last, that every word of the whole New Testament was marked; and when any new illustrations of passages were suggested to him, he received them with transports of joy.

Sir Henry Wotton, after his customary public devotions, used to retire to his study, and there to spend some hours in

reading the Bible, and authors in divinity, closing up his meditations with private prayer.

The excellent Sir John Hartopp in like manner, amidst his other applications, made the book of God his chief study, and his divinest delight. The Bible lay before him night and day.

James Bonnell, Esq. made the Holy Scriptures his constant and daily study. He read them, he meditated upon them, he prayed over them.

The celebrated Witsius was able to recite almost any passage of Scripture in its proper language, together with its context, and the criticisms of the best commentators.

Mr. William Gouge tied himself to read fifteen chapters in the Bible daily.

Lady Frances Hobart read the Psalms over twelve times every year, the New Testament thrice, and the other parts of the Old Testament once.

Susannah, Countess of Suffolk, for the last seven years of her life, read the whole Bible over twice annually.*

* There have been many female characters highly eminent for their piety and knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures, as well as those above mentioned. I will instance a few:—Queen Catharine Parr—Queen Mary—Lady C. Courten—Lady M. Houghton—Lady Cutts—Lady E. Hastings—Lady M. Armyne—Lady A. Halket—Lady Langham—Lady E. Brooke—Lady M. Vere—Mrs. C. Phillips—Mrs. J. Ratcliffe—Mrs. C. Bretterg—Mrs. A. Bayard—Mrs. A. M. Schurman—Mrs. E. Bury—Mrs. E. Burnet—Mrs. E. Rowe, and others.

See Gibbon's *Memoirs of Pious Ladies* and *Biographium Fæmineum*.

In the reign of Henry V. a law was passed against the perusal of the Scriptures in English. It enacted, "That whatsoever they were who should read the Scriptures in the mother tongue, they should forfeit land, catel, lif, and godes, from theyr heyres for ever. and so be condempued for heretykes to God, enemies to the crowne, and most errant traitors to the lande."

• Vide Neale's *history of the Puritans*, vol. 1. p. 7.

The above is an honourable list of female characters. We may therefore place them in the higher class of Bishop Aylmer's account of the fair sex; for this good bishop when preaching at court before Queen Elizabeth, tells his audience, that "women are of two sorts, some of them are wiser, better learned, discreeter, and more constant than a number of men; but another and worse sort of them, and the most part, are fond, foolish, wanton. flibbergibs,

And that the knowledge of Holy Scripture was never intended to be confined to the Clergy, or to kings, learned men, and persons of rank, is evident, not only from what we have observed from Bingham and others, but also from the words of Erasmus, who contributed more perhaps than any other man towards promoting the knowledge of scriptural learning. "I would desire," says he, "that all women should read the Gospel, and the Epistles of St. Paul. I would to God, the plowman would sing a text of Scripture at his plough; and that the weaver at his loom with this would drive away the tediousness of time. I would the wayfaring man, with his pastime, would expel the weariness of his journey. And, in short, I would that all the communication of the Christian should be of the Scripture."

If we come to our own time, it might be made appear, that abundance of the most serious and valuable people, among the different denominations of men, spend a good portion of their time in this sacred exercise. I observe only, still farther, however, that the late Rev. William Romaine, before mentioned, studied nothing but the Bible for the last thirty or forty years of his life.

All these examples, from ancients and moderns, are produced in this place, to encourage the serious believer to abound in this divine employ, for the comfort and edification of his own mind. The more intimately we are acquainted with these writings, the more fully shall we be persuaded of their incomparable excellence. The very learned Le Clerc tells us, "that while he was compiling his Harmony, he was so struck with admiration of the excellent discourses of Jesus, so inflamed with the love of his most holy doctrine, that he thought he but just then began to be acquainted with what he scarce ever laid out of his hands from his infancy." Indeed, the scheme of redemption therein exhibited is most worthy of acceptance, admirably calculated to make all mankind virtuous and happy, could all mankind see its excellence, feel its necessity, and submit to its righteous requirements. Far are we from wishing

tattlers, triflers, wavering, witless, without counsel, feeble, careless, rash, proud, dainty, nice, tale-bearers, eaves-droppers, rumour-raisers, evil-tongued, worse-minded, and in every wise doltified with the dregs of the devil's dunghill."

Brit. Biog. vol. 3. p. 239.

you to pay a blind submission to every thing that goes under the name of religion. Very far are we from desiring you to believe as we believe, or act in every respect as we think right to act. Prize the liberty wherewith God hath providentially made you free. Use your own reason, but use it soberly. Beware of vain and spurious pretensions. Be upon your guard against a sophistical Philosophy, the fashionable folly of the present day. To sound Philosophy we have no objection; but when a spurious kind of wisdom falsely called Philosophy, would rob us of our Bible, to which we are all more indebted than we are willing to confess,* we must say of it as Cicero said of the Twelve Tables:—‘Though all should be offended

* Sir Richard Steel says, “The greatest pleasures with which the imagination can be entertained are to be found in Sacred Writ, and even the style of Scripture is more than human.”

Tatler, No. 233.

We have an account in the Gentleman’s Mag. for June, 1798, of a Mr. Henry Willis, farmer, aged 81, deceased, who had devoted almost every hour that could be spared from his labour, during the course of so long a life, to the devout and serious perusal of the Holy Scriptures. He had read, with the most minute attention, all the books of the Old and New Testament eight times over; and had proceeded as far as the book of Job in his ninth reading, when his meditations were terminated by death.

A still more excellent account we have in Miss Hannah More’s Shepherd of Salisbury-Plain, which is no feigned character, but a narrative of real facts, like the above. In a conversation with Mr. Johnson, he gives the following pleasing account of himself:—“Blessed be God! through his mercy I learned to read when I was a boy.—I believe there is no day for the last thirty years, that I have not peeped at my Bible. If we can’t find time to read a chapter, I defy any man to say he can’t find time to read a verse; and a single text, well followed and put in practice every day, would make no bad figure at the year’s end; 365 texts, without the loss of a moment’s time, would make a pretty stock, a little golden treasury, as one may say, from new year’s day to new year’s day; and if children were brought up to it, they would come to look for their text, as naturally as they do for their breakfast.—I can say the greatest part of the Bible by heart. I have led but a lonely life, and have often had but little to eat; but my Bible has been meat, drink, and company to me—and when want and trouble have come upon me, I don’t know what I should have done indeed, if I had not had the promises of this book for my stay and support.”

Let no man hereafter pretend he cannot find time to read the Sacred Writings. Every person has abundant leisure for the purpose. Find but inclination, and you will soon find time.

I will speak what I think. Truly the little book of the Twelve Tables alone, whether we consider the several chapters, or regard it as the foundation of all our laws, exceeds the libraries of all the Philosophers, as well in the weight of its authority, as in the extent of its utility.”*

The principles of natural religion are all solid, and founded in the reason and relation of things. The Gospel of Christ is equally solid and rational. It takes in, unites, and confirms every principle of nature, and adds a number of circumstances suited to the fallen condition of man. And it calls upon, it invites, it challenges, it commands us to examine its pretensions with all possible care, accuracy, and severity.

“Wrong not the Christian: think not reason yours:

’Tis reason our great Master holds so dear;

’Tis reason’s injured rights his wrath resents;

’Tis reason’s voice obey’d his glories crown.—

On argument alone our faith is built.”

If the Gospel had not been agreeable to the most refined principles of human reason, we should never have found the soundest and most perfect reasoners that ever appeared upon earth, enlist under its banner.† That it is not universally re-

* “*Fremant omnes licet, dicam quod sentio: bibliothecas mehercule omnium philosophorum unus mihi videtur XII. tabularum libellus, si quis legum fonteis, et capita viderit, et auctoritatis pondere, et utilitatis ubertate superare.*”

De Oratore, lib. 1. sect. 195.

† We may add too, that the more active, useful, and benevolent characters in our own more enlightened day have been the firmest believers in the writings of the Old and New Testaments. The late John Wesley spent his whole life, time, strength, and fortune in spreading the knowledge of Christ and his word. The late John Howard, Esq. was equally active in advancing the same cause, in a way as unprecedented, as it was useful. He was a firm believer in the Scriptures, and a very serious and conscientious Christian, of the Baptist persuasion.

Bolingbroke, indeed, tells the world, that “the resurrection of letters was a fatal period: the Christian system has been attacked, and wounded too, very severely since that time.” Page 182. He tells us in another place, “that Christianity has been in decay ever since the resurrection of letters.” Page 185. The late king of Prussia has the same sentiment: “Hobbes, Collins, Shaftesbury, and Bolingbroke, in England, and their disciples, have given religion a mortal blow.” *History of his Own Times*, vol. 1. p. 62.

ceived, is by no means to be ascribed, either to its want of due evidence, or to its being an irrational scheme; but to causes of a very different nature. If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ should shine unto them. This view ought to alarm the fears, and rouse the attention of every man living; but especially of our unbelieving and sceptical countrymen. Rejection of the truths of religion is always in the Sacred Writings ascribed to a fault in the heart and will, rather than to any defect in the head. Ye will not come unto me, that ye may have life.—If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.—The wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.—The ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein. Say not then, my friends, that ye would believe if ye could. Deceive not yourselves by alledging want of evidence. Tell us no longer of the absurdities and contradictions of Scripture. The evidence is ample.* The absurdities will vanish, the

These two great men are mistaken. They confound pure evangelical religion with superstition. The latter we grant, and we glory in the truth, has received a mortal blow; but the former is as unshakeable as the throne of the ETERNAL.

One of the most extraordinary Philosophers of the present age was the late David Rittenhouse, of America. Dr. Rush, of Philadelphia, who is himself an able philosopher and a determined Christian, observes very justly, when speaking of the decease of the above Rittenhouse, who left our world Jan. 26, 1796, that “it is no small triumph to the friends of Revelation to observe, in this age of infidelity, that our religion has been admitted, and even defended by men of the most exalted understanding, and of the strongest reasoning power. The single testimony of David Rittenhouse in its favour outweighs the declamations of whole nations against it.”

* “Reasonable Deists cannot but become Christians, where the Gospel shines.” These several passages of the Sacred Writings account sufficiently well for the infidelity of our several deistical writers. Bolingbroke, Voltaire, Gibbon, Paine, and most others, of whom I have had any knowledge, seem to have been destitute of the proper state of mind for the investigation of reli-

contradictions will cease, when once your minds are brought into a humble, teachable, and religious frame; when the veil is taken from your hearts, and the scales have fallen from your eyes. Deny yourselves, therefore. Cease to live in sin. Mortify your lusts and passions. Part with the pride of false philosophy. Live in humility, purity, and virtue. Be good moral men, conscientious worshippers of God, upon your own principles, sober enquirers after truth, praying for divine direction, and it will not be long before you become believers in Jesus Christ. No moral man can rationally wish to reject the Gospel, because it is all purity and goodness, and the most powerful means, with which the world was ever favoured, of making us virtuous and good.

"In his blest life
I see the path; and in his death the price:
And in his great ascent, the proof supreme
Of immortality."

For, whatever was the cause, it is plain in fact, that human reason, unassisted, failed mankind in its great and proper business of morality: and therefore, I repeat again, he that shall be at the pains of collecting all the moral rules of the ancient philosophers, and compare them with those contained in the New Testament, will find them to come infinitely short of the morality delivered by our Saviour, and taught by his Apos-

gious truth. "From several conversations," says the learned Beattie, "which it has been my chance to have with unbelievers, I have learned that ignorance of the nature of our religion, and a disinclination to study both it and its evidences, are to be reckoned among the chief causes of Infidelity."

Allix's reflections upon the books of the Holy Scripture contain a large number of valuable thoughts, and should be read in opposition to all the flimsy objections of the above Deists. Kett's Sermons at the Bampton Lecture sufficiently invalidate the sophistry of Gibbon. Much satisfactory light has lately been thrown upon the plagues of Egypt, by the learned Jacob Bryant. The Old Testament has been more lately defended against the attacks of Thomas Paine, by David Levi, a learned Jew, with considerable ability. But of all single books, none I think, is equal to the admirable course of lectures by the excellent Dr. Doddridge; a work which no inquisitive Christian should be without in his library.—The Biographia Britannica asserts, that Stillingfleet's *Origines Sæcræ* is "the best defence of revealed religion ever written."

ties.* Add to this, that no other religion, which ever was in the world, hath made provision for pardoning the sins of mankind, and restoring us to divine favour, in a way consistent with the perfections and government of the Supreme Being.

You will give these reasonings, O my countrymen, that weight which ye suppose they deserve. If ye seriously and conscientiously think there is nothing in them worthy of your attention, by all means reject them. If any of you are convinced by what is advanced, that ye have hitherto been mistaken, in rejecting Jesus Christ and his Gospel; or if ye see ground to suspect you may be wrong; let no considerations of shame induce you to deny your convictions or suspicions. Many men have been mistaken as well as you. I myself, ye perceive, have seen reason to change several opinions, which be-

* "Is it bigotry," says an elegant writer now living, "to believe the sublime truths of the Gospel with full assurance of faith?—I glory in such bigotry; I would not part with it for a thousand worlds; I congratulate the man who is possessed of it; for amidst all the vicissitudes and calamities of the present state, that man enjoys an inexhaustible fund of consolation, of which it is not in the power of fortune to deprive him."

"There is not a book on earth so favourable to all the kind, and all the sublime affections, or so unfriendly to hatred and persecution, to tyranny, injustice, and every sort of malevolence, as the Gospel.—It breathes nothing throughout but mercy, benevolence, and peace."

Mr. Paine reflects upon the Scripture for being deficient in moral precepts. I defy him, however, or any other Deist in the world, to produce from all the stores of Heathen writings any thing equal or second to Christ's Sermon on the Mount; to the 12th chapter of Romans, or to the 13th chapter of the 1st Corinthians. Let any man shew us a system of morality equal to these passages if he can.—The truth is, Mr. Paine knows very little of the matter.—And, moreover, what has he to do with morality? he that is so extremely immoral in his own conduct?—Out of thine own mouth shalt thou be judged, O thou immoral man!*

See the life of Thomas Paine written by Francis Oldys, M. A. of the University of Pennsylvania, and that of the same person written by Peter Porcupine. From these accounts it appears, that, let Mr. Paine talk about philosophy and morality as much as he pleases, he has been, at different periods of his life, a very bad and immoral man, and, so far as appears, continues the same unto this day.

* Let Mr. Paine call to mind the story of the ten pounds at Dover!

fore I had thought founded in truth. Every person, indeed, must naturally and necessarily at first be a stranger to the Gospel redemption. Our efforts, therefore, should be made to become acquainted with it, and to get into the good and right way. If we look back upon the foregoing pages, we shall see that several of the characters there mentioned had been much led astray. Through different means, however, they discovered their error. They acknowledged their fault. They lamented their sin. They laid aside their prepossessions, and sought for the truth with all their skill and abilities.— They were convinced in their understandings;* converted in their hearts; they believed in the Redeemer; obeyed his Gospel; and, through infinite and unmerited grace, were eternally saved. Why then should not you pursue the same measures, if you have any suspicions that every thing is not with you as it should be? You must allow, if the Gospel-account of things be true, it is inconceivably important. Treat it not, therefore, with contempt, neglect, indifference, but examine the matter to the bottom. Follow the example of West and Littleton, on a former page, and let no man lead you by the nose to destruction, or sneer you out of salvation. Examine the evidence, and, with all simplicity and humility of mind, judge according to that evidence. And if ye are finally convinced, that Jesus is the Christ, act nobly, confess his name, like Rochester,† to the teeth of his opposers, and strive like him, to undo all the mischief you may have occasioned to others.

* The reader will find a very clear and concise account of the true foundation of all human knowledge in the letters of the celebrated Euler, the greatest mathematician of the present age, to a German Princess, vol. 1. let. 115. p. 511. This extraordinary man, second to none but the immortal Newton, was a serious and conscientious Christian, and avowed his belief in Christ upon all proper occasions. And while his great Master declared that he found "more sure marks of authenticity in the Bible, than in any profane history whatever;" he writes to the above Princess, that "the holy life of the Apostles and of the other primitive Christians appeared to him an irresistible proof of the truth of the Christian religion." Letter 114. For the above declaration of Sir Isaac Newton, see Bishop Watson's admirable Apology for Christianity in answer to Mr. Gibbon. let. 3. p. 28.

† We have another very respectable and honourable instance of this nature to present to the reader, which has just taken place, and which others of our deistical gentlemen would find their advantage in imitating: Dr. Okely, son, I believe, of the late eminent

"But, if we should be so seriously religious, as you seem to think necessary, we shall lose all the comforts of life, and become dull and melancholy."

Greek scholar, Mr. Francis Okely, who is now physician to the Northampton Infirmary, some months ago, published an octavo volume, entitled, "Pyrology, or the Connection between Natural and Moral Philosophy, with a Disquisition on the Origin of Christianity;" in which it was completely exploded, together with the doctrine of a future state. It has pleased God, however, to shew Dr. Okely the vanity of his philosophy, and he has done himself the honour to publish the following manly renunciation of his errors:

"The author of *Pyrology* feels himself irresistibly impelled to make known, that he is now thoroughly convinced of the moral government of God, the immortality of the human soul, or future state, and of the truth of Christianity in its fullest extent. For his involuntary error he confidently hopes to be pardoned by Almighty God, through the merits of Jesus Christ; but at the same time thinks it his duty, in this public manner, to solicit the pardon of his readers for having, as much as in him lay, though he trusts ineffectually, contributed to lead them astray."

Missionary Magazine.

We may observe upon this subject, that there are other conversions in the present day from Deism to Christianity, besides this of Dr. Okely, and those we have already mentioned in these papers. Dr. Vanderkemp, a Dutch physician, was convinced and recovered from infidelity by an alarming providence, and has devoted himself as a Missionary for the conversion of the heathen.—Captain Wilson also is another remarkable instance, who, in gratitude to God for his goodness to him, undertook to convey the Missionaries to the Southern Ocean, and has accomplished the undertaking with great and surprising success, without putting the Society to the smallest expence.

We are told in the *Walpoliana*, that Gray, the poet, was a Deist, though a violent enemy to Atheists; and it does not appear that ever he was changed.—*Month. Mag.* for Oct. 1798.

Henry Redhead Yorke, Esq. one of the gentlemen who was sentenced to a long imprisonment for seditious practices, may be mentioned as another instance of a person whose mind has undergone a great change during his imprisonment; and he has been open and honest enough to avow it.

"The vices and frauds of the professors of Christianity," says he, "have nothing to do with Christianity itself. To know what it is, we must look to the only proper place, The Scriptures. The Christian religion is peculiar to itself; it has nothing in common with the other systems of religion which have existed in the world. It has God for its founder, and reason for its basis. It is every where uniform, consistent, and complete."

See this gentleman's very valuable letter to the Reformers for more sentiments to the same purpose.

If this were true, one hour's enjoyment of the glory of heaven would more than make amends for all your present loss. It is not, however, true. The ways of godliness are grievously belied. For there is no happiness like the happiness of religion, even in the present world; and no peace like that of God, which passeth all understanding.

“The men of grace have found
 Glory begun below;
 Celestial fruits on earthly ground,
 From faith and hope do grow.
 • The hill of Sion yields
 A thousand sacred sweets,
 Before we reach the heavenly fields,
 Or walk the golden streets.”—

“But—I shall be singular!”—This is partly true, and partly otherwise. And suppose you are singular: how will this injure you? You will have the approbation of your own mind. You will have God, and Christ, and angels, and all good men your friends. And is not this sufficient, but you must have the approbation of the devil and all his servants too, the children of vice and folly? Mistake not, fond man; the approbation of both is incompatible. You cannot serve God and Mammon; neither can you have the friendship of God, Christ, angels, and good men, and at the same time possess the approbation of the devil, and his servants, whose portion is in this life. The thing is impossible. You may as well attempt to reconcile light and darkness, fire and water, heaven and hell.—But suppose you should become a convert of the Gospel of Christ, and be truly in earnest about the salvation of your soul, and, of course, singular in your way and manner of life; what inconvenience would you sustain? or what real dishonour would you undergo? Was not Socrates singular among the Athenians? Were not Enoch and Noah singular among the Antediluvians? Was not Abraham singular in Canaan, and Lot in Sodom? Were not Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, and all the prophets, very singular persons in their day? Our blessed Lord, his holy Apostles, and all the primitive Christians, were they not uniformly the same? And where was the misfortune of all this? When we read the story of these ancient worthies, don't we admire their wisdom, their courage, their choice, and

their noble superiority to all those poor creatures who opposed them, and cast out their name as evil? What man of taste does not approve the conduct of Abdiel in Milton? Never character was more enviable, or more worthy of imitation:

——“The seraph Abdiel faithful found,
Among the faithless, faithful only he;
Among innumerable false, unmov'd,
Unshaken, uneduc'd, untterrify'd
His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal;
Nor number, nor example with him wrought
To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind
Though single. From amidst them forth he pass'd,
Long way through hostile scorn, which he sustain'd
Superior, nor of violence fear'd ought;
And with retorted scorn his back he turn'd
On those proud tow'rs to swift destruction doom'd.—

——Gladly then he mix'd
With his own friendly pow'rs, who him received
With joy and acclamations loud, that one,
That of so many myriads fall'n, yet one
Return'd not lost. On to the sacred hill
They led him high applauded, and present
Before the seat supreme; from whence a voice,
From 'midst a golden cloud, thus mild was heard:
Servant of God, well done, well hast thou fought
The better fight, who single hast maintain'd
Against revolted multitudes the cause
Of truth, in word mightier than they in arms;
And for the testimony of truth hast borne
Universal reproach, far worse to bear
Than violence; for this was all thy care
To stand approv'd in sight of God, though worlds
Judg'd thee perverse.”

From all these considerations, it is evident, that there are times and circumstances, when if a man will be truly religious, and preserve an unshaken fidelity to his Creator and his Saviour, he must be singular; he must step aside; he must beg to be excused in a variety of cases. He must be singular, or lose his soul. Let not the fear of this odious imputation, therefore, deter any man from exemplary piety. The giddy multitude, and the sons and daughters of pleasure, falsely so called, may pretend to sneer and deride; but yet, notwithstanding, they will secretly applaud your virtuous conduct.—There is a certain dignity, a real nobility, a secret charm, in

a consistently religious character, which none can despise.* And, sooner or later, the whole human race will be of one opinion concerning it.

Instead of being heroes in wickedness then, or ring-leaders in the cause of infidelity (for there are not a few who make a mock at sin, and glory in the shame) let it be your highest ambition to become Christian heroes;† heroes who can forgive, and love, and bless your enemies; who can conquer the world and all your own degenerate propensities; heroes, whose heads are big only with schemes of mercy and of kindness; whose hands are continually stretched out in prayer and acts of benevolence! and who are never at ease, but in going about doing good to the bodies and souls of men; heroes‡ in whom religion sits, as

* Lord Peterborough, more fam'd for wit than religion, when he lodged with Fenelon at Cambray, was so charmed with the piety and virtue of the Archbishop, that he exclaimed at parting: "If I stay here any longer, I shall become a Christian in spite of myself."

† Sir Richard Steele's *Christian Hero*, is a little book worth the attention of the reader, especially of the reader who is disposed to reject the Gospel. It contains an argument to prove, that no principles but those of Religion are sufficient to make a great man. In this little book we have a sort of comparison between the characters of Cato and Cæsar, Brutus and Cassius, Jesus Christ and St. Paul. These illustrious Heathens make but a very poor figure, when placed by the side of these Christian heroes.

‡ One of the most illustrious heroes that England ever bred, a man equally celebrated for valour, for genius, and for learning, was not ashamed to address his wife in the views of approaching dissolution in the following pious strain:—"Love God, and begin betimes. In him you shall find true, everlasting, and endless comfort. When you have travelled and wearied yourself with all sorts of worldly cogitations, you shall sit down by sorrow in the end. Teach your son also to serve and fear God whilst he is young, that the fear of God may grow up in him. Then will God be a husband to you, and a father to him, a husband and a father that can never be taken from you."

This is true heroism! Such was Sir Walter Raleigh!

How different is the conduct of the French and English, during the course of the present unhappy war, on the subject of religion. It does not appear, that the former have ever acknowledged the government of the Divine Being, or ascribed any of their successes to his all-superintending Providence; whereas the generals and admirals of the latter have frequently, if not constantly ascribed all

it were, in triumph, with all the passions in subjection around her; with all the lustre that wisdom, and prudence, and piety, and learning, and good sense, and good breeding, can bestow to make you amiable; heroes, in short, whose daily endeavour is to clothe the naked, to feed the hungry, to visit the sick, to instruct the ignorant, to be a father to the fatherless, a husband to the widow, and a friend to the friendless of all parties and

their success to his blessing. The gallant admiral Nelson very properly introduced his account of the victory with which he was favoured, with the tremendous name, "Almighty God has blessed his majesty's arms, in the late battle, by a great victory over the fleet of the enemy." This was very proper; this was infinitely becoming a great man; this was the way to insure the Divine protection. Them that honour me, I will honour; but they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed. 1 Sam. ii. 30. If the French have been successful in many of their efforts, let it be considered that God cannot succeed their attempts upon the nations out of any regard to them as a virtuous people, but only to answer his own purposes, and to fulfil his own predictions, concerning the subversion of the seat of the beast, and to bring in the Messiah's kingdom in all its glory. The French are only the tools and instruments in the hands of God's indignation. They have yet a deal of direful work to do. When that is accomplished, they shall be laid aside; and, I hope, chastised and turned unto the God of their fathers.

Dr. Crome, a German writer, calculates, that the present horrible war, from 1792, to the end of 1796, has cost the several united powers, 232,166,666 pounds, with 700,000 men, and France 326,958,332 pounds with 1,000,000 of men! At the same period he considers England alone as having lost 150,000 men, and spent 93,333,332 pounds. Is it not evident from hence that the time is come when God is pouring out his vials of wrath upon the nations which compose the seat of the beast?—See the Monthly Mag. for Nov. 1797.

Some people are exceedingly alarmed at the consideration of our national debt, which, being about five hundred millions of pounds sterling, they suppose must crush us to atoms. Let such persons, however, reflect for their comfort, that a single ten per cent. upon all the national property would wipe off the whole. The permanent and immoveable property of the country, it is supposed, would produce on a fair sale, the enormous sum of 2,500,000,000 pounds. The moveable or chattel property of the country is probably of equal value at least. Here then is a national stock of 5,000,000,000 pounds sterling. If from this we deduct the 500,000,000 we owe, there will remain a surplus of four thousand five hundred millions of pounds sterling!

Consult Charnock's letter on Finance, and on National Defence.

denominations of men. If such is your heroism, the ear will bless when it hears you; the eye will give witness when it sees you; the blessing on him that is ready to perish will come upon you; and the widow's heart will dance in your presence for joy.—Simple as this account may seem, it is a heroism to which few, comparatively, ever attain, or have any idea of. It will require all your fortitude, and the utmost stretch of your best powers. In pursuing such a line of conduct, in conjunction with your temporal occupation, you will be employed usefully and comfortably while you live, and you will be training up for the general assembly, and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, when you die. Be strong in the Lord, then, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that he may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.—Fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life. Let the well known advice of the justly celebrated Locke, which is both wise and seasonable, be acceptable in your eyes. It will assuredly do you no harm, and, if you pay due attention to it, will do you eternal good. He himself was an example of his own precepts. For fourteen or fifteen years he applied himself closely to the study of the Holy Scriptures, and employed the last period of his life hardly in any thing beside.—He was never weary of admiring the grand views of that sacred book, and the just relation of all its parts. He every day made discoveries in it, which gave him fresh cause of admiration. And so earnest was he for the comfort of his friends, and the diffusion of sacred knowledge among them, that even the day before he died, “he very particularly exhorted all about him to read the Holy Scriptures, exalting the love which God shewed to man, in justifying him by faith in Jesus Christ, and returning him special thanks for having called him to the knowledge of that Divine Saviour.” It has been often repeated too, that, to a person who asked him, which was the shortest and surest way for a young gentleman to attain to the true knowledge of the Christian religion, in the full and just extent of it, he replied—“Let him study the Holy Scripture, especially the New Testament. Therein are contained the words of eternal life.—It hath God for its author—Salvation for its end, and Truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter.”*

* The ingenious and pious Lavater, after predicting, like Sir

This is a noble testimony, both in life and in death, from this renowned Christian philosopher. Many hundreds of a similar nature might be laid before the reader, besides those we have already selected. And I confess, there is no kind of reading, that is so edifying to me, as the final scenes of those persons, who have been eminent in their day, either for their virtues or their vices. A death-bed is usually a detector of the heart. And to see a fellow-mortal in the ruins of nature, glorying over the king of terrors, in all his most horrible forms, is to me by far the grandest spectacle that can be exhibited upon earth. It is, as Seneca observes of Cato, a sight worthy of God to look down upon.* What are all the triumphs of kings and conquerors, when compared with the triumphs of abundance of the children of the Most High in all ages? The Bible contains a rich compendium of these religious Worthies.† The

Isaac Newton and Dr. Hartley, the general spread of infidelity, thus expresses himself concerning the truth of the Gospel: "If God has not spoken and acted through Christ, then there never has been a God who hath acted and spoken. If Christ is the work of chance, then man and the whole world is the work of chance also. If Christ did not want the assistance of a God to the performance of his wonderful deeds, nature also can perform her works without the interference of a God."

See Secret Journal of a Self Observer, vol. 2. p. 338.

Compare with the above the death-bed scene of Garzo, the great grand-father of Petrarch, who was so celebrated for his probity and good sense, that he was frequently consulted by philosophers, and the learned of those times. "After living to the age of 104, in innocence and good works, he died, as Plato did, on the day of his birth, and in the bed in which he was born. His death resembled a quiet sleep. He expired surrounded by his family, without pain or uneasiness, while he was conversing about God and virtue."

Vide Memoirs of Petrarch.

* *Ecce spectaculum dignum, ad quod respiciat, intentus operi suo, Deus! Ecce par Deo dignum, vir fortis cum mala fortuna compotitus! Non video, inquam, quid habeat in terris Jupiter pulchrius, si convertere animum velit, quam ut spectet Catonem, jam partibus non semel fractis, nihil ominis inter ruinas publicas erectum.*

Sen. de Divin. Prov.

† For the dying advice and last scene of the Saviour of mankind, see John xiv.—xix. chapters—for good old Jacob's, see Gen. xlviii. xlix. chapters—for Joseph's, Gen. 1.—for Moses's, Deut. xxxii. xxxiii. chapters—for Joshua's, Jos. xxiii. xxiv.—for David's, 1 Chron. xxviii. 8, 9; and 2 Sam. xxiii. 1—9.—Stephen's, Acts vii—and Paul's, Acts xx. and 2 Tim. iv. 6—8.

book of Martyrs too records a noble army of valiant souls, who went through fire and water, through racks and tortures, to their blood-bought reward. The late horrible transactions on the continent have added an illustrious page to the records of religious renown.* And if the same diabolical spirit should pervade this happy country, I doubt not but there is a goodly company among us, who, through the power of grace divine, will set at nought, and bid defiance to all the threats, guillotines, and engines of the most virulent Pseudo-Philosophers† in the kingdom. So far as I myself am concerned, whether it shall please the gracious Ruler of the world to call me hence by a storm of persecution, by the sword of the enemy, by the enmity of secret adversaries, or in the natural course of Providence, I, above all things upon earth, desire to quit this mortal scene in a fiery chariot of divine love, and heavenly rapture. It is said that the celebrated Scaliger was so delighted with that famous stanza of Sternhold and Hopkins in the 18th Psalm:—

“On Cherubs and on Cherubims
Full royally he rode;
And on the wings of mighty winds
Came flying all abroad:”

that he used to profess, he had rather have been the author of it, than to have enjoyed the kingdom of Arragon.

Be this as it may, I have seen so many lukewarm Christians quit the world in such a doubting, timorous, uncomfortable, miserable manner, that I solemnly declare I had rather, if it please God, take my leave of this earthly tabernacle, with my faith, hope, love, peace, and joy in full exercise, and go with all my sails unfurled into the haven of eternal rest, than be made emperor of the whole universe. I well know profes-

* Vide Barruel's history of the French clergy.

† The character of philosophers has been much the same in all ages. Cicero has described it as accurately as if he had lived in the present day. “Quotus enim quisque Philosophorum invenitur, qui sit ita moratus, ita animo ac vita constituus, ut ratio postulat? Qui disciplinam suam non ostentationem scientiæ, sed legem vitæ putet? Qui obtemperet ipse sibi, et decretis suis pareat? Videre licet, alios tanta levitate et jactatione, uti his fuerit non didicisse melius; alios pecuniæ cupidos, gloriæ nonnullos, multos libidinum servos, ut cum eorum vita mirabiliter pugnet oratio: quod quidem mihi videtur esse turpissimum.”

sions like these will subject me to the charge of intemperate zeal and enthusiasm, as is observed on a former page. Such charges, however, I most cordially despise, and hold the philosophic authors of them in as much pity and contempt, as they can entertain for the warm and zealous Christian. I want not to quit the stage of life in the spirit of Bolingbroke, Hume, Gibbon, Chesterfield, Godwin, and other such like characters. The feeling, sensible, confident, joyful approbation of Heaven, is above all estimation; and the praise of men of loose morals, or pharisaical professions, is of little consideration in my esteem. I wish them wiser and better, and that they may see their error before it is too late. Several of those worthy persons, whose names we have here recorded, died bearing a noble testimony to evangelical truth. Their condition was enviable. To many such I myself have been a joyful witness in the course of my poor ministrations. But the death-bed scene, which above all others I have either read or seen, that seems to have had in it the largest share of divine communications,* is that of the Rev. John Janeway, fellow of King's College, in Cambridge, who died at the age of twenty-four, in June 1657.

If it should appear too rapturous; consider, my Countrymen, what your feelings would be, should news be brought that you had obtained a prize in the State Lottery of twenty or thirty thousand pounds; or that you were left heir to an estate of immense value, which you had but little reason to expect. If, when the Israelites had passed the Red Sea in safety, they saw it right to sing a song of triumph for their deliverance, and to praise the Lord with timbrels and with dances: if when the same people were delivered from the Babylonish captivity, they went out with joy, and were led forth with peace, the mountains and the hills breaking forth before them into singing, and all the trees of the field clapping their hands; if then the lame man leaped as a hart, the tongue of the dumb sung, and the ransomed of the Lord re-

* The serious reader will find the doctrine of the Holy Spirit's influence on the mind ably defended against our modern lukewarm professors of religion from the charge of enthusiasm, in Bishop Pearson on the Creed, Art. 8; a work with which every Christian should be intimately acquainted, in these times of abounding licentiousness, both of principle and practice.

turned, and came to Sion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads, joy and gladness going before them, and sorrow and sighing fleeing away at their advance: if when king David brought the ark, a symbol of the Divine presence, unto Sion, he danced before it in all his might with shouting, and the sound of the trumpet, while the envious and malignant Michal severely censured his pious hilarity: if, when the same royal Enthusiast* was only banished from the tabernacle of God, he affectionately cried out—As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God: my soul is athirst for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God:—My soul thirsteth for thee; my flesh longeth for thee; my soul followeth hard after thee; my soul gaspeth after thee as a thirsty land: and if, when this same enviable Fana-tic came to die, he again cried out in the full assurance of faith—He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; this is all my salvation, and all my desire:† if, when the lame beggar, who had been healed by Peter and John, entered with them into the temple, he walked, and leaped, and praised God, the Scribes and Pharisees being all in arms against them: if when Paul and Silas had been scourged and imprisoned for the name of the Lord Jesus, they prayed in the dungeon at midnight and sang praises unto God, for the honour conferred upon them, and in believing views of the reward which awaited them: and if, when the Church of Rome is overturned, the whole triumphant host is represented as crying aloud—Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!

If there has been, and would be, and ought to be, such ardent desire, and such rapturous joy and triumph upon all these very inferior occasions; shall not a man, who has long been buffeted by the world, allured and seduced by the flesh, and

* It is a common mistake to suppose that none but religious people are enthusiasts. Enthusiasm is found in every form and species of human life. The orator and the poet, the hero and the politician, the intolerant advocate for toleration, and the projective defender of Christianity, may all be enthusiasts. See a fine account of different kinds of enthusiasts in Andrew's Scripture Doctrine of Grace, page 93—97; a passage which every one should read and well consider, who is forward in dealing out the charge of enthusiasm against zealously religious people of all denominations.

† What must have been David's feelings when he composed the 96th, 145th, and five following psalms?

vilely tempted by the foul apostate Spirit; and who, notwithstanding, has for a good season been living under a strong and vigorous sense of the knowledge of salvation by the remission of his sins, and a sweet experimental union and communion with God, the Father of spirits, through the infinitely perfect obedience and all-atoning death of his only begotten Son, by the communications of the eternal Spirit; shall not a man so situated, I say, rejoice in hope of the glory of God with exceeding great and triumphant joy,* when he is within sight of land, driving with wind and tide into the haven of rest, just upon the point of taking assured possession of an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away?†

“What heart of stone, but glows at thoughts like these?
Such contemplations mount us; and should mount
The mind still higher; nor ever glance on man,
Unraptur’d, uninflam’d.”

If ever mortal lived the life of an angel upon earth, Mr. Janeway seems to have been the man. How far do the enjoyments even of lively Christians fall short of those lengths, and breadths, and heights, and depths of the love of Christ, with which he was favoured? To evince this, I will present the reader with a short sketch of his dying scene, and leave him to judge, whether he ever saw or perused any account of an exit so far beyond the common run of Christians. And yet, by the grace of God, and a diligent use of the divinely appointed means, this, or something like this, might be the attainment of all.

Mr. Janeway was born in the year 1633, at Tylly in Hertfordshire. At about twelve years old he made a considerable proficiency in mathematic science, and in the study of astronomy, and other parts of useful literature. At seventeen he was admitted to King’s College in Cambridge. At eighteen

* Why may not a man, who makes it his main concern in life, to serve God and save his soul alive, expect peculiar manifestations of the divine favour? It is certain that the promises of Scripture to this purpose are exceedingly strong and numerous, and the examples not less so. I believe I speak considerably within compass when I say, that there are in the Bible upwards of a hundred of these special manifestations to the servants of God recorded.

† Dr. Priestly considers these strong consolations, in the view of approaching dissolution, as enthusiasm. See his observations on the increase of Infidelity, p. 27.

it pleased God to enlighten his understanding, and to give him the knowledge and experience of evangelical truth. Mr. Baxter's Saint's Everlasting Rest, became his favourite book. This he read, studied, imitated. Now he knew that astronomy, with which he was so delighted, surveyed but a dunghill in comparison of that system of things which the religion of Jesus contemplates. Stars, about which Mr. Paine makes such a pothor, are but dirty clods, when compared with that glory which lies beyond the reach of the highest human contemplation. He was now, therefore, wholly occupied with divine contemplations, and tasted so much sweetness in the knowledge of Christ, that it was discernible in his very appearance, and he counted every thing but dross and dung, in comparison of the knowledge of Christ and him crucified. Not that he looked upon human learning as useless: but when fixed below Christ, not improved for Christ, or set in opposition to Christ; he looked upon wisdom as folly, upon learning as madness, and upon genius as a curse, which would make a man more like the devil, more fit for his service, and put a greater accent upon our misery in another world.

At the age of twenty he was admitted a Fellow of his College. Still, however, he went on with his religious contemplations, and became so mighty in prayer, and other sacred exercises, that he forgot the weakness of his body, and injured his health. He studied much, prayed much, and laboured much in every way he could contrive to be of use to mankind, and to promote the honour of the Divine Being. Sickness coming on, he was never permitted to preach but twice. His disorder, which was of the consumptive kind, encreased rapidly upon him, but yet with some intervals of relief. During the greatest part of his sickness, however, he was so filled with love, and peace, and joy, that human language sinks under what he saw and felt. During the greatest part of his illness, he talked as if he had been in the third heaven; breaking out every now and then into extasies of joy and praise.—Not a word dropped from his mouth but it breathed of Christ and heaven. He talked as if he had been with Jesus, and come from the immediate presence of God. At one time he said;—“O my friends, stand and wonder; come, look upon a dying man and wonder. Was there ever greater kindness? Were there ever more sensible manifestations of rich grace? O, why

me, Lord! why me? Sure this is akin to heaven. And if I were never to enjoy more than this, it were well worth all the torments which men and devils could invent. If this be dying, dying is sweet. Let no Christian ever be afraid of dying. Oh! death is sweet to me! This bed is soft. Christ's arms, his smiles and visits, sure they would turn hell into heaven! Oh! that you did but see and feel what I do! Come, and behold a dying man, more cheerful than ever you saw any healthful man in the midst of his sweetest enjoyments. Oh Sirs! worldly pleasures are pitiful, poor, sorry things, compared with one glimpse of his glory which shines so strongly into my soul. Oh! why should any of you be so sad, when I am so glad! This, this is the hour that I have waited for."

About forty-eight hours before his dissolution, he said again:—"Praise is now my work, and I shall be engaged in that sweet employment for ever. Come let us lift up our voice in praise. I have nothing else to do. I have done with prayer, and all other ordinances. I have almost done conversing with mortals. I shall presently be beholding Christ himself, that died for me, and loved me, and washed me in his blood. I shall in a few hours be in eternity, singing the song of Moses, and the song of the Lamb. I shall presently stand upon mount Sion with an innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, and Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant. I shall hear the voice of much people, and be one amongst them who say—Hallelujah! Salvation, glory, and honour, and power be unto the Lord our God! And again we say, Hallelujah! Methinks I stand as it were one foot in heaven, and the other on earth. Methinks I hear the melody of heaven, and by faith I see the angels waiting to carry my soul to the bosom of Jesus, and I shall be for ever with the Lord in glory. And who can choose but rejoice in all this?"

In such a rapturous strain as this he continued, full of praise, full of admiration, full of joy, till at length, with abundance of faith and fervency, he cried aloud;—"Amen! Amen!" and soon after expired.*

* Mr. Janeway arrived at these high attainments in the divine life, by a constant perusal of his Bible: a frequent perusal of Mr. Baxter's *Saints' Everlasting Rest*, a book for which multitudes will have cause to bless God for ever; and by spending a due proportion of every day in secret prayer, and devout contemplation.

The Earl of Mirandola and Concordia, who died in the flower

And now, my friends and countrymen, with sentiments of the most benevolent and affectionate regard, both for you, and

of his age, about the year 1494, after he had for some time quitted all his great employments under Charles the fifth, emperor of Germany, was esteemed the most beautiful person of that age, and a man of the most exalted genius; and yet, after having read all that could be read, and learned every thing that could then be learned, wrote to his Nephew, an officer in the army, in a style worthy of the above example of Janeway:—"I make it my humble request to you," says he, "that you would not fail to read the Holy Scriptures night and morning with great attention; for as it is our duty to meditate upon the law of God day and night, so nothing can be more useful; because there is in the Holy Scriptures a celestial and efficacious power, inflaming the soul with divine fear and love."

Our celebrated Spencer, though a man of dissipation in his youth, in his more advanced years entered into the interior of religion, and in his two hymns on Heavenly Love, and Heavenly Beauty, hath expressed all the height and depth of Janeway's experience:

"Then shalt thou feel thy spirit so possess'd,
And ravisht with devouring great desire
Of his dear self, that shall thy feeble breast
Inflame with love, and set thee all on fire
With burning zeal, through every part entire,
That in no earthly thing thou shalt delight,
But in his sweet and amiable sight.—
Then shall thy ravisht soul inspired be
With heavenly thoughts, far above human skill,
And thy bright radiant eyes shall plainly see
Th' idea of his pure glory present still
Before thy face, that all thy spirits shall fill
With sweet enragement of celestial love,
Kindled through sight of those fair things above."

Spencer's religion, we see from the above extracts, is, like that of the Quaker's, "a religion of feeling." This too is unquestionably the religion of the Bible. Whom having not seen ye love: in whom though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. See this subject considered at some length in Mr. Wilberforce's Practical View, chap. 3, sect. 2d & 3d.

The same devout and heavenly spirit breathes strongly in all the old ascetic authors. Augustine is famous for it; so were several others of the ancient Fathers of the church. Thomas A. Kempis is excelled by none in this way. St. Bernard is very pious. His hymn on the name Jesus is in a high strain of this kind.

"Desidero te millies,
Mi Jesus! quando venies?
Me lætum quando facies?
Me de te quando saties?"

St. Augustine's hymn, which begins.

every human being, whether Jew, Turk, Infidel, Heretic, or Christian, I submit these reflections, concerning Religion and the Sacred Writings, to your most serious consideration. What impression they may make upon your minds, is known only to the God of the spirits of all flesh.* My earnest request to you,

“Ad perennis vitæ fontem
Mens sitivit arida:”

is in the same strain; and has been imitated in that favourite old hymn recorded in the Pilgrim's Guide:

“Jerusalem, my happy home,
O that I were in thee.

O would my woes were at an end,
Thy joys that I might see! &c. &c.”

Almost every thing of this kind, however, which has been left us by our forefathers is written in a style highly depraved, and is usually equally devout and superstitious. The pious reader, therefore, will be upon his guard in the perusal of such authors, and take the good, and cast the bad away. The Bible alone is free from human weaknesses.

* If the reader should find himself dissatisfied with the Plea for Religion and the Sacred Writings, which is here put into his hand, let him by no means give up the cause as desperate, but rather let him lay it aside, and have recourse to those more able and explicit Treatises, which I have occasionally recommended in the Notes. Or, if he thinks himself capable of rendering a more effectual service to the cause of evangelical truth, let him take up his own pen, and confound the enemies of religion. Learned laymen, especially, should come forward in vindication of the Gospel; since every thing which proceeds from the clergy on religion, is supposed to spring from a self-interested source. Mr. Wilberforce has done himself much honour. He is a bold and able advocate for a much injured cause. Nor less so is the excellent Miss Hannah More. She is a credit to her sex, and a blessing to her country. It is scarcely possible, however, for authors on this subject to be too numerous. We are not wanting in clerical writers; but those who have treated on subjects purely religious, among the other ranks of society, are comparatively few; and especially among the Princes and Nobles of the land. Mr. Horace Walpole has given us a catalogue of the royal and noble authors of England, Scotland, and Ireland, since the conquest; and, I think, he produces, during all those ages, only 10 English Princes, 92 Peers, and 14 Peeresses. To these he adds 24 Scotch royal and noble authors, with 11 Irish Peers: In all about 150; a small number when it is considered that they are usually the best educated men in the country.

In Germany have been published in the course of six years, from 1785 to 1790, no less a number than 27,372 books, on the following subjects, and in these proportions:

is, that you will give them a fair and dispassionate hearing, and seek truth, at least, with as much warmth and assiduity, as we usually employ in our secular pursuits. No man ever succeeded greatly in life, who did not embark zealously in its concerns. No man ever became a good scholar, without much time and application.—And no man ever made any considerable proficiency in things divine, till all the leading powers of his soul were engaged therein. Permit me then to exhort you to be in earnest in your religious enquiries. Apply your minds with zeal and impartiality to the investigation of sacred wisdom. This is the concern, the duty, the privilege, the glory of every human being. The most ancient and sublime author in the world hath exhausted all the treasures of nature to express its intrinsic value: Where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding? Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living. The depth saith, It is not in me; and the sea saith, It is not with me. It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire. The gold and the chrystal cannot equal it: and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold. No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls;

1 General Literature	68
2 Philology	1527
3 Divinity	4863
4 Jurisprudence	2158
5 Medicine and Surgery	1898
6 Metaphysics and M. Philosophy	965
7 Education	506
8 Politics and Finance	1885
9 Military Sciences	154
10 Physics and Natural History	1729
11 Arts and Manufactures	1100
12 Mathematics	581
13 Geography and History	4779
14 Belles Lettres	3798
15 History of Literature	762
16 Miscellaneous	689

27,372

Gent. Mag. Feb. 1796, p. 147.

From the Monthly Mag. for June 1798, it appears, that the average number of books published in Germany, from 1785 to the close of the year 1797, is 5,360 annually

for the price of wisdom, is above rubies. The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold. Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding?—Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.

Is such is the value of wisdom, the search will undoubtedly repay the labour. But, have we any assurance that the inestimable treasure may be found? The wisest of men will answer to our satisfaction: My son, if thou wilt receive my words; and hide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thy ear unto wisdom, and apply thy heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God—thou shalt understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path. All this implies the greatest possible attention to our religious concerns.

With these fine sentiments I take my leave, commending you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, if you will submit to its authority, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified. If you are right, in your present state of mind, may you continue in the right way to the end of your days, and increase and abound therein more and more. I think, however, you should be extremely cautious how you contradict and blaspheme what so many wise and good men esteem the truth of God, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets—Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish!—Speaking modestly, your situation is not altogether without danger. It is impossible you should be perfectly satisfied that all is as you could wish.*

“Since then we die but once, and after death
Our state no alteration knows,
But when we have resign’d our breath
Th’ immortal spirit goes
To endless joys, or everlasting woes;
Wise is the man, who labours to secure
That mighty and important stake,

* He was no inconsiderable man who said, “To doubt of the Gospel is folly, to reject it is madness.”

Jortin’s Sermons, vol. 4. p. 111.

And by all methods strives to make
His passage safe, and his reception sure."

As to myself, I am thoroughly satisfied with that God, that Redeemer, and that Sanctifier which the Christian Scriptures hold out to the view and acceptance of mankind. I am perfectly pleased with those Scriptures,* and with all the divine

Let the sceptical reader consult Dr. Robertson, the Historian's very sensible discourse on the situation of the world at the time of Christ's appearance, and its connection with the success of his religion. A conscientious reader cannot fail of being edified by such a discourse.

* When I have spoken above in such strong terms of the volume of Revelation, it is by no means intended to cast any slight upon the volume of Nature. While we daily study the former, we shall do well to pay all due attention to the latter, according to our opportunities of investigation. To an enlightened observer, they both carry indubitable marks of their great original. The heavens declare the glory of God; and the earth is full of his riches. The most perfect catalogue of stars, before the present ingenious and indefatigable Dr. Herschel appeared, did not contain quite 5,000; but by the vast superiority of his glasses, he hath discovered 44,000 stars in a few degrees of the heavens;* and by the same proportion it is supposed, that 75,000,000 are exposed in the expanse to human investigation.† All these stars are of a fiery nature, and conjectured to be so many suns with their systems of planets moving round them. We know the sun to be the centre of our system. It is accompanied with 19 planets, besides about 450 comets. What an amazing idea does this give us of the works of God! And if such is the work, what must the workman be!

Every part of nature, moreover, with which we are acquainted, is full of living creatures, with stores of every kind to supply their necessities. This little globe of ours is known to contain within its bowels a great variety of valuable minerals, and to be covered with about 20,000 different species of vegetables, 3,000 species of worms, 12,000 species of insects, 200 species of amphibious animals, 550 species of birds, 2,600 species of fish, and 200 species of quadrupeds. How immense then must be the number of individuals! One fly is found to bring forth 2000 at a time, and a single cod-fish to produce considerably more than three millions and a half of young. Nay, Leewenhoek tells us, that there are more animals in the milt of a single cod-fish, than there are men upon the whole earth. Over all these creatures preside upwards of 730

* See the dissertations of Dr. Herschel, relative to this brilliant portion of the heavens, in the Philosophical Transactions.

† Jerome de Lalande, director of the French Observatory, supposes that a glass of Herschel's powers may discover 90 millions of stars in the whole surface of the heavens, and that even this number is but small, in comparison of what exists — Monthly Mag. for Oct. 1798, p. 265.

dispensations therein recorded. Our God hath done, is doing and will do all things well. It is altogether fit he should govern his own world, and bow the rebellious nations to his sway. The present degenerate state of Christendom is too disgraceful to his government, to be permitted to continue beyond the predicted period. He will, therefore, arise and plead his own

millions of human beings. Such is the family of the Great Father here upon earth! And when it is considered that the earth itself, with all its furniture, is no more, when compared with the whole system of things, than a single grain of sand, when compared with a huge mountain, we are lost in the immensity of God's works, and constrained to cry out, Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that thou visitest him! And if to this immensity of the works of creation, we add the admirable structure of the whole, and the exquisite perfection of every part, we shall not fail of being exceedingly affected with the ineffable wisdom of the Divine Architect. To bring this consideration more within the grasp of human comprehension, let us take, as it were, to pieces, and examine the several parts of any one creature which God hath made; and we shall find a perfection among its several powers, and an adaptation to its situation in the grand scale of existence, far surpassing human skill. Let the most perfect anatomist, that ever existed, make his observations upon the human frame; let him examine with the greatest possible attention the *tout ensemble* of the structure; then let him proceed to the several parts, of which the microcosm is composed; first, the powers of the mind; the understanding, the will, the memory, the conscience, and the various affections: next the five senses; the touch, the taste, the smell, the hearing, and the sight: afterwards let him proceed to the several fluids of the body; and then to the 300 bones, the 40 different sorts of glands, the 466 muscles, the 40 pair of nerves, the fibres, the membranes, the arteries, the veins, the lymphæducts, the excretory vessels, the tendons, the ligaments, the cartilages; and let him explore the whole and every part with the greatest degree of accuracy, knowledge and judgment, that ever centered in man; and then let him honestly say whether he could suggest the smallest improvement in any one respect. If he were an Atheist before such investigation, like the celebrated Galen, he would be converted to the belief of the Divine Existence, would compose a hymn in praise of the Creator of the world, and sing with the great Progenitor of mankind:

“These are thy glorious works, Parent of good;
Almighty, thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair; Thyself how wondrous then!
Unspeakable! who sitt’st above these heav’ns,
To us invisible, or dimly seen
In these thy lowest works; yet these declare
Thy goodness beyond thought, and pow’r divine.”

cause, and all the wickedness of men, and the convulsions and distress of nations, shall wind up to his eternal credit. The Lord is King, be the people never so impatient; he sitteth between the Cherubim, be the earth never so unquiet. His Gospel is no other than the plan devised by infinite wisdom for the melioration of mankind. The immortal seed is sown; the principle of life has vegetated; the little leaven is diffusing itself far and wide. Much has been done; much is doing; much shall be done. Millions of reasonable creatures have already found eternal rest in consequence of the Redeemer's dying love: multitudes of souls at this moment are happy in their own bosoms under a sense of the divine favour: and innumerable myriads of men shall arise, believing in his name, trusting in his mediation, and rejoicing in his salvation, maugre all the opposition of fallen Christians and apostate spirits. Wise and gracious is the Divine Being in all his ways, and I rejoice that he is the Governour among the people. To his service I avowedly devote my feeble powers, as long as he shall vouchsafe me the exercise of them; nor will I cease to speak the honours of his Majesty while the breath continues to actuate this mortal frame. And,

“When even at last the solemn hour shall come,
And wing my mystic flight to future worlds,
I cheerful will obey; there, with new powers,
Will rising wonders sing: I cannot go
Where universal love not smiles around,
Sustaining all yon orbs, and all their suns,
From seeming evil still educing good,
And better thence again, and better still
In infinite progression.—But I lose
Myself in Him, in light ineffable!
Come then, expressive silence, muse his praise.”



APPENDIX I.

THE Reformation contended for in these papers is a peaceable reform, begun and carried on by the wisdom of the three branches of the Constitution, as far as the Constitution is concerned; and by the Bishops and Clergy, of every denomination, so far as the moral and religious conduct of the people is concerned. The absolute necessity of such reformation is founded on the prophetic declarations of Daniel before repeatedly mentioned. The nature of the reformation which I conceive to be necessary to our lasting preservation as a kingdom, is, that whatever militates against the genuine spirit of Christ's religion in the establishment should be removed; and that all orders of clerical characters, especially, should set themselves, with the utmost zeal and determination, first to reform themselves, and then to stop the torrent of iniquity, which threatens to involve the country in the most complete destruction. The Dissenters and Methodists are moving heaven and earth to promote the cause of religion in their respective ways. If the 18,000 Clergymen in the establishment would exert themselves for the good of souls with equal zeal and fervour, the established church would not only be the safer, as an establishment, but the divine protection would be more effectually engaged on our behalf. Righteous nations never fall.* Unfortunately, however, numbers of our order

* Amongst other unfavourable signs of the times, the vast number of bankruptcies in this kingdom is none of the least. I suppose we average six or seven hundred every year, besides all the composition businesses, which are still more numerous. But what I here chiefly refer to, as a proof of depraved morals, is, that, of all the instances of fraud, intentional or otherwise, practised upon the public, an instance of after payment is rarely recorded: and, whenever such an instance occurs, it is always spoken of with astonishment, as a thing not to be expected. If a man goes into the high road, or breaks into your house, and robs you of a few pounds, he is infamous: and if he can be caught and arraign-

of men are the greatest enemies to the country and to religion. We promote the interest of Satan more effectually by our indolence, worldly-mindedness, lukewarmness, and misconduct, than all the wicked and immoral characters in the kingdom put together. Only think! Eighteen thousand men, led on by six and twenty Bishops, all filled with faith and the Holy Ghost, with an ardent love to Jesus Christ, and with a judicious, but warm and affectionate zeal for the salvation of souls, paid by the State, and sent out into every corner of the land to preach the everlasting Gospel! What a glorious consideration! How should we make the ungodly and profane skulk into corners, and hide their impious heads! But, alas! how is the gold become dim, how is the most fine gold changed! for from the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land. Dissenters are increasing, Methodists are multiplying, wickedness is spreading, our churches are emptying, infidelity is pervading all orders of society, and the daughter of Zion is like to be left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city. We may look at the neighbouring nations, and learn, at their expence, what our own fate will assuredly be ere long. Who is so blind? who is so ignorant? who is so selfish and secure? who is so unread in history? who is so unacquainted with the prophecies, as not to see, that the salvation of Europe is suspended on its wisdom, in correcting what is amiss in its morals, and unevangelical in its ecclesiastical constitutions?

It should seem, however, notwithstanding the growing immorality of the age, and the other alarming symptoms of our

ed, and the thing proved, he atones for his offence at the expence of his life. But a man, in a way of trade, shall cheat you of hundreds and thousands, shall pay you ten, five, or even only two shillings in the pound, yet he is a good fellow, a man of honour. He begins again, keeps it up, cuts a dash, cracks again, and all is well. He never dreams, that upon every principle of justice, honour, and conscience, he is as much a debtor for all his deficiencies as though the law had never acquitted him. What an accumulation of guilt is upon this land on these accounts? Of the many thousands in this country, who fall short in their payments, how few, how extremely few do we meet with, or hear of, who, afterwards, like the most worthy Reynier, call their creditors together, and pay them, what, indeed, is justly due, but what they never could demand?

nation, that the Governour among the armies of heaven, and the inhabitants upon earth, hath still a favour to dear old England. He is loath to give us up. The wise and vigorous measures pursued by the king and his ministers are surely tokens for good to my country. The late very splendid victories are propitious signs. The acts too, for excluding suspicious foreigners, and arming the whole nation, are masterpieces of sound policy. Hitherto assuredly the Lord hath helped us. He hath given us a patriotic king, able ministers, skilful generals, brave soldiers, unparalleled admirals, and gallant sailors; above all, he hath poured out a spirit of wrestling prayer upon large numbers of religious people. These are symptoms of the most propitious kind. But, with all these advantages, since God usually works by means, how is it possible for any country, that is not in a constant high state of preparation, to resist such a mighty armed and growing republic as France? If the people in this kingdom will not very generally come forward and qualify themselves for resistance, we must ultimately fall. But, if we should share the fate of the other nations, there will be no just reason to accuse the government. The war was inevitable on our part. It was, moreover, ordained of God for the subversion of the seat of the beast.* They have been extremely vigorous in their measures, and have done what men in their situation could do. Let the people remember, that we live in a period, when one of God's great and afflictive providential dispensations is coming upon the world; a dispensation predicted for some thousands of years; and let them second the endeavours of their Governors, and come forward, man, woman, and child, to defend themselves against the common enemy, as they would against an army of bears, wolves, and tygers; and we

* It has been noticed on a former page, that the Pope and Mahomet rose in or about the same year. The former is driven from his seat exactly at the end of 1260 years. And is it not a circumstance extremely remarkable, that the very same man, in the very same year, should invade the empire of the latter during a state of profound peace, seemingly without any reason? We know the Turk is to fall, and we have some cause to suppose the period of that catastrophe will be at no great distance from the subversion of the Pope's secular dominion. I fear we shall be on the wrong side of the question, if we attempt to support either him or the remaining popish states, and shall suffer for our intermeddling.

shall be safe under the divine protection, while that protection is afforded. But, in my opinion, every remaining popish, secular, and superstitious circumstance, which is calculated to offend the Majesty of Heaven, and to oppose the interests of Christ's kingdom,* should be removed from the ecclesiastical part of our Constitution, and nothing should be left undone to engage his continued favour and protection.

The Dissenters and Methodists, I have observed, are moving heaven and earth to promote the interests of religion in their several ways, and to oppose the torrent of vice and infidelity, which is overspreading these happy and heaven-favoured lands. A kind of association has been formed among some of the established Clergy at Manchester, to preach a weekly lecture in each others churches; which, no doubt, will be attended with good effect. This is a laudable effort, and shews a proper attention to the circumstances of the times,† and should be followed in all populous towns. We ought every one to step out of the routine of our accustomed methods of doing good, and strive with peculiar energy to save our

* What can be more inimical to the interests of the Gospel of Christ in the world, than the damnable monopoly of Church Livings, so extremely common among all the higher orders of the Clergy in this country? More than one instance of this nature is given in the foregoing papers. To these may be added the following. A certain clerical character, whom I could name, is at this time in possession of 700 pounds a year private fortune. He is a tippling immoral person, with little or no family, besides his wife. One living he has got, at a good distance, of 600 pounds a year, besides two rectories, one of 500, the other of 350 pounds a year. At the same time, he has obtained a Prebendary of considerable value in one of our magnificent cathedrals. Will any wise man undertake to say, that a Clergyman of this description believes the Gospel of Christ? All such characters are undoubted infidels in disguise, do an infinite deal of harm to the interests of religion in the world, and, in a well ordered state of things, would be degraded from their pretended sacred office. Such men may cry out as loud as they please against Thomas Paine and his deistical brethren—their craft is in danger!—but they themselves are much more to blame, and shall be condemned with tenfold confusion. Tom Paine is a saint, when compared with such fellows.

† Something similar to this has likewise been practised for some years by several pious and respectable clergymen in the metropolis.

people's souls from death, and our beloved country from ruin. An association of Protestant Dissenters, of different denominations, has also been formed at Bedford.* About thirty ministers in that neighbourhood are already engaged to co-operate in spreading the knowledge of the Gospel through all the towns and villages, in that vicinity, upon the most liberal plan. The same kind of associations are formed also in Kent, Dorsetshire, Surry, Suffolk, Lancashire, Cheshire, Derbyshire, Northumberland, and will probably in a little time pervade the whole of the three kingdoms. This is good news to all who wish well to the cause of religion, without regard to sects, parties, and opinions; and may convince us that the Gospel of Jesus wants nothing but fair play; and that human establishments, and great worldly emoluments, are not essentially necessary for its propagation and support. The Puritans were frowned on by the government from the time of the Reformation to the days of Charles I. and yet they increased to such a height as to overturn both Church and State. The Dissenters have been, in some respects, frowned on again from the Restoration to the present time; yet they, and the Methodists, who are in the same predicament, are much more upon the increase,† than we of the Establishment, who are fostered by the government, attended by the nobles and gentry of the land, and supported by the State, at the expense of near two millions a year. When shall it once be, that the Great

* Consult Mr. Greatheed's Sermon at Bedford on General Union: a valuable discourse.

† It is said that the Methodists have increased many thousands of late years. This brings to my mind an anecdote that is related of the late Rev. George Whitefield, in the reign of King George II. which is, that when a certain Bishop was complaining to the King of Mr. Whitefield's great and eccentric labours, and advising with him what steps were best to be taken to put a stop to his preaching, his Majesty very shrewdly replied, "My Lord, I can see no other way but for us to make a Bishop of him. This will stand a good chance of stopping his wild career." If this be a recipe for curing a Clergyman of an excess of public preaching, the following prescription, given by a valuable author about forty years ago, would have no little effect in preventing the growth and increase of Methodism.—"Let the Clergy live more holily, pray more fervently, preach more heavenly, and labour more diligently, than the Methodist ministers appear to do: then will Christians flock to the churches to hear us, as they now flock to the meetings to hear them."

Ones of the world will be capable of seeing, that oppression, of every kind and degree, for conscience sake, always produces an effect directly contrary to the wishes and intentions of the oppressor?

The villages in England alone, besides cities and market towns, are about 30,000. All these call upon us for every exertion to evangelize them, and to save the people's souls alive.—A branch off from the Methodists has likewise spread far and wide, under the direction of the late Mr. Alexander Kilham. At present they have about seventeen circuits, twenty preachers, and upwards of 5,000 persons in society, and are increasing considerably each year. Shall we then, we, the eighteen thousand Clergymen of the establishment, who are under such superior obligations, many of whom are paid by the state, at the rate of some hundreds, and others at the rate of some thousands a year; shall we be all asleep, sit still, and pursue no peculiar vigorous measures, each one in our own sphere, or various of us in concert, till destruction come upon us to the uttermost? * Is not the time nearly arrived for the subversion of the nations? And can any thing under heaven prevent our sharing in the common fate of Christendom, but a speedy and effectual return to evangelical principles and practices? Is not our sister kingdom already deluged with blood? And is not the alarm of war in our own borders! Does not the murderous sword draw nearer and nearer every year? And shall we Clergymen, who above all men in the kingdom are devoted to the most assured destruction, be indifferent to circumstances? Let the very laudable conduct of the several zealous bodies of Christians in this nation, before mentioned, not excite our rage and envy, but rather let it provoke the great body of us, the established Clergy, to jealousy and emulation. If ever there was a time when it was necessary to awake out of sleep, and be alive to the interests of the Gospel, surely it is now. If our most reverend and right reverend

* It is related of the Rev. John Carlyon, LL.B. in the Gentleman's Magazine for Oct. 1798, that when his health would not permit him to reside upon the valuable Living of Bradwell in Essex, he resolutely gave it up, and would not serve it by a Curate, though entreated by the Bishop so to do. There was not, however, in this case that close trial of conscientious integrity, which we have known in some others; because Mr. Carlyon was a person of considerable private fortune.

the Archbishops and Bishops are indisposed towards a meliorated state of the ecclesiastical part of the constitution, let them at least lay aside their affectation of pomp and show, come among their clergy and people, and set us an example of a warm and judicious zeal* in preaching—not merely a refined morality—but the great and glorious truths of the everlasting Gospel,† in such a way as we can all understand and feel. This would have a strong tendency to animate and encourage the pious part of the Clergy in their ministerial labours for the good of mankind, and to discountenance and overawe the licentious and profane, those dreadful pests of every neighbourhood, which has the misfortune to be cursed with their example.‡ Such a reformation as this, is within the power of every Bishop upon the bench, whose age and health will admit of exertion: and no one need wait for the concurrence of his brethren. As matters, however, are now managed, a large proportion both of our Bishops and Clergy are, in a very considerable degree, a useless burden upon the public. We not only do little or no good, but we do a great deal of harm.

* See Bishop Gibson on the evil and danger of Lukewarmness in Religion.

† Consult the Charge of Bishop Horsley in 1790, on the Truths of the Gospel.

For the various efforts which have long been making, and are at this moment still making, for the destruction of all the churches and governments in Christendom, see those two very curious and interesting works, Robinson's *Proofs of a Conspiracy against all the Religions and Governments of Europe*, and Barruel's *Memoirs of Jacobinism*.

Bishop Newton, in his three admirable volumes on the Prophecies, which were first published about fifty years ago, hath spoken in terms nearly as strong as any of the foregoing, concerning the danger which the country is in because of national iniquities. See vol. 2. p. 239.

Bishop Horne also hath expressed his fears to the same purport, at the 162d page of his *Sixteen Sermons*; to which two able writers, I beg leave to recommend the reader.

‡ Bishop Burnet speaks on this subject with great concern. "I say it with great regret," says he, "I have observed the Clergy in all places through which I have travelled, Papists, Lutherans, Calvinists, and Dissenters; but of them all, our Clergy are most remiss in their labors in private, and the least severe in their lives. —Unless a better spirit possess the Clergy, arguments, and what is more, laws and authority, will not prove strong enough to preserve the church."—*Own Times*, vol. iv. p. 411, 430.

While we continue dead to the interests of religion; subscribe what we do not believe; read what we do not approve; and set the pulpit and reading desk at loggerheads one with the other: while our doctrines are unevangelical; our spirit lukewarm; our minds secular and worldly; our studies merely literary and philosophical; and our conduct immoral; far better would it be that the nation were without us, and all our preferments sequestered to the purposes of the State, as they respectively become vacant, and the people left to provide at their own expence for ministers, as it is among all denominations of Dissenters. In this case, ministers in general would both be better provided for, the people would be better served, the government would gradually obtain considerable sums of money to aid them in their efforts to save the country, and all the dumb dogs, the useless and immoral part of the clergy, would be sent a packing, one to his farm, another to his merchandize.* Can any rational man say, that this would be a misfortune to the nation? At least, were I in the prime minister's place, and wanted to raise money for the salvation of the kingdom, as it is well known he must do, I should certainly turn my attention to the property of the church. What need is there that a Bishop should enjoy public money to the amount of—from two to twenty thousand pounds a year? and for what? Where is the necessity too that a private Clergyman should hold a living or livings to the amount of one, two, or three thousand pounds a year? I protest my sagacity cannot discern either the necessity or propriety of these things.† If I

* Dr. South very justly somewhere says, if my memory fail me not, that “many a man has run his head against a pulpit, who would have cut an excellent figure at a plough tail.”

† The ingenious Montesquieu tells us, that “the prosperity of religion is different from that of civil government. A celebrated author says, that religion may be well in an afflicted state, because affliction is the true state of a Christian. To which we may add, that the humiliation and dispersion of the Church, the destruction of her temples, and the persecution of her martyrs, are the distinguishing times of her glory. On the contrary, when she appears triumphant in the eye of the world, she is generally sinking in adversity.” *De la Grand et la Decad des Romains.*

Agreeably to this, Bishop Newton, in his learned Dissertations on the Prophecies, speaking of Constantine's open profession of Christianity, says, “Though it added much to the temporal prosperity, yet it contributed little to the spiritual graces and virtues of Christians. It enlarged their revenues, and increased their en-

might be permitted to speak from my own feelings, I can truly say I never took more pains in the ministry, than when I had only sixty pounds a year. Since I have been married and had a family, my income from the church has never amounted to a hundred and twenty pounds a year. Notwithstanding this, I have been, thank God, not only content, but happy. I have laboured hard, studied hard, and probably, have been as useful, and well satisfied with my condition as the fattest rector in all the diocese of Chester. If any person, in the mean time, had bestowed upon me a living of five hundred or a thousand pounds a year; to be sure I should have been under great obligation to such persons, but I very much question whether I should have been made either a more happy man, or a more useful minister of the Gospel.* It is much more likely I should have been very seriously injured, should have composed myself to rest, and cried with the rich fool, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. The Clergy with large preferments are, generally speaking, the drones of society. They neither write any thing to good purpose, nor do they take any serious pains in their vocation of preaching the Gospel. If they do write, it is usually something foreign to their profession; and if they do sometimes hold forth from the pulpit, it is in such a way as is calculated to do neither much good nor much harm. Not being truly in earnest for their own salvation, they have but little zeal for the salvation of others.† A reduction of some

dowments; but proved the fatal means of corrupting the doctrine, and relaxing the discipline of the Church.”—Vol. II. p. 164.

* This brings to my recollection a story of one of the Popes of Rome, who, seeing a large sum of money lying upon his table, said to one of the Cardinals, “The church can no longer say, Silver and gold have I none.”—“No,” answered the other, “nor can the church any longer say, Take up thy bed and walk.”

† I add here the account which Dr. Hartley, one of the wisest and best of men, a serious member of our church, gives of the state of the Clergy, in the year 1749.

“I choose to speak,” says he, “to what falls under the observation of all serious attentive persons in the kingdom. The superior Clergy are, in general, ambitious and eager in the pursuit of riches; flatterers of the great, and subservient to party interest; negligent of their own particular charges, and also of the inferior Clergy, and their immediate charges. The inferior Clergy imitate their superiors, and, in general, take little or no care of their par-

of our church-livings, an increase of others, with a prohibition of pluralities, where they are above a certain value, would have some good effect, but, in my opinion, a still better thing for the real interests of religion would be, to grant the use of our churches to the people in the several districts of the country, to sequester all the emoluments to the uses of the State, after the death of the present incumbents, and to leave the people to provide and pay their own ministers. This would make us look about us. But can any man suppose, that the Gospel of Christ itself would be a sufferer by such a measure?

ishes than barely what is necessary to avoid the censure of the law. And the Clergy, of all ranks, are, in general, either ignorant, or if they do apply, it is rather to profane learning, to philosophical or political matters, than to the study of the Scriptures, of the oriental languages, of the Fathers, and ecclesiastical authors, and of the writings of devout men in different ages of the church. I say this is in general the case; that is, far the greater part of the Clergy, of all ranks in this kingdom, are of this kind."

Observations on Man, vol. II. p. 450.

Notwithstanding what I have observed above, and what is here advanced by this learned man, we have had, in the present age, a few noble exceptions to the general rule.

APPENDIX II.

AFTER what has been said in the foregoing papers, I do not see how I can, either in honour or conscience, continue to officiate any longer as a minister of the gospel in the establishment of my native country. It appears to me, in my coolest and most considerate moments, to be, with all its excellencies, a main branch of the anti-christian system. It is a strange mixture, as hath been already observed, of what is secular and what is spiritual. And I strongly suspect, the day is at no very great distance, when the whole fabric shall tumble into ruins, and the pure and immortal religion of the Son of God rise more bright, lovely, and glorious from its subversion.* The several warnings of the Sacred Oracles seem to be of vast importance, and necessary to be observed: Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul; be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the day of the Lord's vengeance; he will render unto her a recompence. Jer. li. 6.—We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed; forsake her, and let us go every one to his own country. Ibid. li. 9.—When ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel, the prophet, stand in the holy place, then let them which be in Judea flee to the mountains. Matt. xxiv. 15, 16.—These are only remotely applicable to the business in hand. The following is more directly so.—I heard a voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. Rev. xviii. 4.

* In this happy country we seem to have many and strong symptoms of political decay: for

“States thrive or wither as moons wax and wane,
Ev’n as God’s will and God’s decree ordain;
While honour, virtue, piety, bear sway,
They flourish; and, as these decline, decay.”

Cowper’s *Expostulation*.

In obedience to these instructions, and under a strong disapprobation of the several anti-christian circumstances of our own established church,* the general doctrines of which I very much approve and admire, I now, therefore, withdraw; and renounce a situation, which, in some respects, has been extremely eligible. I cast myself again upon the bosom of a gracious Providence, which has provided for me all my life long. Hitherto, I must say, the Lord hath helped me. I have never wanted any manner of thing which has been necessary to my comfort. And though I neither know what to do, nor whither to go, yet

“The world is all before me, where to choose
My place of rest, and Providence my guide.”

This extraordinary step the sacred dictates of conscience compel me to take. I am truly sorry for it. To me few trials were ever equal. I have loved the people among whom I have so long lived and laboured. And I have every reason to be satisfied with their conduct towards me. Neither hath the great Head of the church left us without seals to our ministry. The appearance of fruit, at times, has been large.--- And there are some, no doubt, among the people of our charge, who will be our joy and crown in that day of the Redeemer's coming. My friends must consider me as called away by an imperious Providence; and, I trust, they will be

* Thomas Paine observes, that “all national institutions of churches, whether Jewish, Christian, or Turkish, appear to me no other than human inventions set up to terrify and enslave mankind, and monopolize power and profit.”

The Jewish institution, at least, ought to have been excepted in this censure. It was unquestionably divine, and was appointed for the most important purposes, and attended with the most indisputable evidence.

Another author, much more capable of judging than Mr. Paine, hath said, in perfect conformity with my own opinion, that “National churches are that hay and stubble, which might be removed without difficulty or confusion, from the fabric of religion, by the gentle hand of reformation, but what the infatuation of Ecclesiastics will leave to be destroyed by fire. 1 Cor. iii. 12, 13. National churches are that incrustation, which has enveloped, by gradual concretion, the diamond of Christianity: nor can, I fear, the genuine lustre be restored. but by such violent efforts as the separation of substances so long and closely connected must inevitably require.”

provided with a successor more than equal, in every respect, to their late affectionate pastor. I think it necessary to say in this place, that the doctrines which I have preached unto them for six and twenty years, I still consider as the truths of God. I have lived in them myself, and found comfort from them. I have faithfully made them known to others, as thousands can bear me witness; we have seen them effectually to the pulling down the strong holds of sin and Satan, in a variety of cases; and I hope to die in the same faith, and to find them the power of God unto the salvation of my own soul in eternal glory by Christ Jesus. I mean to preach the same doctrine, the Lord being my helper, during the whole remainder of my life, wheresoever my lot may be cast. I am not weary of the work of the sacred ministry. I have, indeed, often been weary in it, but never of it. I pray God my spiritual vigour, life, and power, and love, and usefulness may abound more and more to the end of my Christian warfare.

“Awake, my dormant zeal! for ever flame
With gen’rous ardour for immortal souls;
And may my head, my tongue, my heart, my all,
Spend and be spent in service so divine.”

“But, if you had so many objections to the established church, why did you enter into it? Why did you continue to officiate so long in it? And why did you not decline it long ago?”

I will tell you honestly.—All my habits, and the prejudices of my education ran in favour of the church. My father and friends were in the same habits. During my younger days, I took for granted that every thing was right, nor had I any suspicions to the contrary. If I had so seriously considered these things thirty years ago, I humbly hope I should have acted agreeably to my convictions. I recollect, indeed, about that time to have had my fears that some things among us were not as they should be. I saw with my own eyes, that almost all the Clergy, with whom I am acquainted, were practically wrong at least. Between them and the precepts of the Gospel there seemed a perfect contrast. My mind, however, was then but little informed upon religious subjects. I was distrustful of my own judgment, and thought it prudent to be guided by the judgment of those, of whose piety I had a good opinion. Few young persons think deeply and solidly, and

fewer still have reading and experience sufficient to enable them to form an accurate estimate upon such intricate questions. Indeed, most men, in the earlier stages of life, are led, as I was, by the prejudices of education, and the example of those with whom they converse. There is, moreover, so much that is excellent in the articles, homilies, and common forms of our church, that it cannot be a matter of wonder, if unenlightened and inexperienced young men, who are either careless about religion, or whose desires are good, and intentions simple, should comply with what they hear spoken of in terms of high approbation, and see practised every day by their superiors both in age, rank and learning. The idea too, that we have left the church of Rome because of her delusions, and are members of a Reformed and Protestant community has no little weight with the larger part of candidates for the sacred ministry.

I am well aware, that many of the most serious and useful of the clerical brethren are of an opinion very different from me, respecting the established religion of this country. It is not long since a clergyman of this description told me, in a manner extremely emphatical, that "our church is all pure and without spot."* I was surprised at such an assertion, from a conscientious man; but I have no material objection to any person's enjoying his own sentiments in peace. I claim the same liberty, and desire nothing farther. Earnestly wishing success to the ministerial labours of every good man, whether in the establishment or out of it, and without either condemning or approving one denomination or another, I obey the painful dictates of my own mind. Possibly I am mistaken. If I am, it is to be lamented, because I prefer my present situation to most others I know of in England. If I had been disposed to leave it, I have not been without opportunity. Twenty years ago, the late John Thornton, Esq. of Clapham, near London, voluntarily offered to procure me better preferment, if I would

* This brings to my mind a remark which Mr. Whiston used frequently to make upon the very learned and excellent Bishop Gibson, "That he seemed to think the church of England, as it just then happened to be, established by modern laws and customs, came down from heaven with the Athanasian creed in its hand."

accept of it; but I told him, after expressing my gratitude, that Divine Providence seemed to have placed me where I was, and I could not think of quitting my station, merely for the sake of a better living; till the time should come when the same Providence should call me away. That time seems to me to be now come; since I cannot any longer keep my church and retain my honour in obeying the dictates of conscience. In my opinion, this is a providential call to quit my station, though I never expect to be so happily circumstanced again. I know well what pain such a determination will give my dear people; but, with all due regard to the feelings of my friends, I must consider, that I am amenable, in the first place, to the great Head of the church for my conduct; and must, on the highest considerations, endeavour to conduct myself agreeably to his pleasure. After a thousand defects, both in my public administrations and private conduct, I can almost say, I have done my best to promote as well the temporal as spiritual interests of the town of Macclesfield, and I heartily wish my successor may be more acceptable, more heavenly minded, more laborious, more useful, and more successful in winning souls to Christ.

“To all this, I am aware, it will be objected, that I am taking a very disreputable step, and that a vast majority of the men of sense and learning around me are of a different opinion.”

Very true. I admit every thing which can be said on this score, in the utmost latitude. But a passage or two of our Saviour's discourses is a sufficient support against all obloquy of this nature. These monopolisers of sense and learning must answer for themselves, and I must give an account unto God for my own conduct. I consider myself as a shadow that passeth away. I feel the infirmities of nature coming on, and death stands ready at the door to summon me before the bar of my Redeemer. It is, therefore, of consequence that we act now as we shall wish we had acted then. At that trial, no man can be responsible for his brother:—Every one that hath forsaken houses or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the Gospel's shall receive a hundred fold now, with persecutions, and in the world to come eternal life. Matt. xix. 29. Mark x. 29, 30.

Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the

Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. Mark viii. 38.

“Why are you so squamish in little matters? Why not make yourself easy, and conduct yourself like the rest of your clerical brethren?”

To tell you the truth, candid reader, whosoever you may be, I have long and earnestly endeavoured to quiet my conscience, and to reconcile it to my present situation. I have used every method in my power for this purpose. I have pleaded the example of others, great men, good men, useful men: I have soothed it; I have desisted from reading, thinking, examining; I have pleaded the wishes of my friends, the usefulness of my ministerial labours; the disagreeableness of changing my situation, and forming new connections; the extreme inconvenience of giving up present income, &c. &c. but after all I can do, conscience follows me from place to place, and thunders in my ear, What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?—He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me: and he that loveth a son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me: and he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life, shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

How would you conduct yourself in such a case? According to the thirty-sixth Canon we are willingly and *ex animo* to subscribe, that the book of Common Prayer, and of ordering of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, containeth in it nothing contrary to the Scriptures; and that we acknowledge all and every the thirty-nine articles, besides the ratification, to be agreeable to the word of God.*

* As to Mr. Paley's scheme of subscribing the thirty-nine articles, as articles of peace; it is all sophistry, and such as an honest man should be ashamed to avow. I admire the abilities of the man, but detest his recommending prevarication to the Clergy.—See his very able and political work, entitled, *Moral and Political Philosophy*, b. 3. p. 1. chap. 22. p. 183. edit. 1.

Mr. Paley is very justly reprehended by the excellent Mr. Gisborne. “The opinion which Mr. Paley maintains,” says he “appears to me not only unsupported by argument, but likely to be productive of consequences highly pernicious.—That subscription may be justified without an actual belief of each of the Articles,

God of my fathers! what a requirement is this? Can I lift up my hand to heaven and swear by Him that liveth for ever and ever, that I do willingly and *ex animo* subscribe as is legally required? And can any man living thus subscribe, who has thoroughly considered the subject? We must shuffle and prevaricate in some things, say and do what we will. I myself strongly approve the general strain of the doctrines of our church; but then here is no choice. It must be willingly and *ex animo* all and every thing! There is no medium.

And can I (among other things which are to be subscribed) believe from my soul, before the searcher of hearts, who requireth truth in the inward parts, and in the face of the whole Christian world declare, that "whosoever doth not hold the Catholic faith" as explained in the Athanasian creed—"and keep it whole and undefiled, shall without doubt, perish everlastingly?" This hellish proposition we are enjoined not only to believe ourselves, but to affirm that we do willingly and *ex animo* subscribe to it, as being agreeable to the word of God; and then we must openly profess our faith in it fourteen times every year. I am not unacquainted that various manœuvres are made use of to render these harsh expressions palatable; but all illustrations and modifications of these damnatory sentences, appear to me illusive. Bishop Burnet has said all that well can be said upon them, but, in my opinion, to very little

as I understand Mr. Paley to intimate, is a gratuitous assumption. On this point let the Articles speak for themselves. Why is an Article continued in its place, if it be not meant to be believed? If one may be signed without being believed, why not all? By what criterion are we to distinguish those which may be subscribed by a person who thinks them false, from those which may not? Is not the present mode of subscription virtually the same, as if each Article were separately offered to the subscriber! And in that case could any man be justified in subscribing one which he disbelieved?"

"No circumstance," he adds, "could have a more direct tendency to ensnare the consciences of the Clergy: no circumstance could afford the enemies of the established church a more advantageous occasion of charging her ministers with insincerity, than the admission of the opinion, that the Articles may safely be subscribed without a conviction of their truth, taken severally, as well as collectively. That opinion I have seen maintained in publications of inferior note, but I could not, without particular surprize and concern, behold it avowed by a writer of such authority as Mr. Paley."

purpose. Honestly, therefore, did Archbishop Tillotson declare to him, "The account given of Athanasius's creed seems to me in no wise satisfactory. I wish we were well rid of it." And so do I too, for the credit of our common Christianity. It has been a mill-stone about the neck of many thousands of worthy men. To be sure, declarations like these descended out of the bottomless pit, to disgrace the subscribing Clergy, to render ridiculous the doctrines of the Gospel, to impel the world into infidelity, and to damn the souls of those, who, for the sake of filthy lucre, set their hands to what they do not honestly believe. The truth is, though I do believe the doctrine of the Trinity, as revealed in the Scripture; yet I am not prepared, openly, and explicitly, to send to the devil, under my solemn subscription, every one who cannot embrace the Athanasian illustration of it. In this thing the Lord pardon his servant for subscribing in time past. Assuredly I will do so no more. Those who can do it are extremely welcome to the best bishoprics and livings in the kingdom. I should like to retain what I have already gotten, but not upon the conditions required. As an honest man, and a man under expectations of salvation, I must renounce my present situation, and the little emoluments which arise therefrom. There is no other alternative.*

"But you are acting a part extremely imprudent, on account of your family."

True; but then I am obeying the dictates of conscience, and, of course the commands of God. And you know where it is written:—By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange

* I have for some years made myself tolerably easy under the damnable clauses of the Athanasian creed, by omitting to read it at the times appointed. But to an upright mind, this is not perfectly satisfactory; because we solemnly declare and subscribe our names before the Bishop, that we will conform to the Liturgy of the Church of England as by law established. Now every time we omit to read the said creed, or any other part of the service of the church, when appointed by law to be read, we are guilty of a breach of engagement. So that, whether we read the creed in question, or neglect to read it, we are culpable, if we do not *ex animo* approve of it.

country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.*

"You are already in the Church, and have got over the business of subscription. You may continue, therefore, in your present station without being called upon to repeat the same painful ceremony."

I have many years been determined never to subscribe again agreeably to the requirement of the 36th Canon, whatever offers of preferment might be made me. But, when I reflect seriously and closely upon the subject, this does not satisfy me. I cannot help considering my holding a church, and complying with all its rites and ceremonies, as a silent acquiescence in, and a tacit approbation of, all the unevangelical traits of the Church of England as by law established. While such is my situation, I certainly constitute a part of the grand system of the antichristian apostacy, which, as I understand the prophetic scriptures, is, in due time, to undergo a total subversion.

"You are quitting a situation of uncommon usefulness."

Granted: With my views, however, I cannot honourably and safely do otherwise. I believe, and fear, and tremble at

* I do not recollect reading or hearing of any instance so like unto this of Moses, as that of the Marquis of Vico in Italy, who died A. D. 1592, at the age of 74. When he was come to years, and the knowledge of Jesus Christ, he refused to be called the son and heir to a Marquis, a cup-bearer to an Emperor, nephew to a Pope, and chose rather to suffer affliction, persecution, banishment, loss of lands, livings, wife, children, honours, and preferments, than to enjoy the sinful pleasures of Italy for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the honours of the most brilliant connections, and all the enjoyments of the most ample fortune; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.

See his Life at large, written by Mr. Samuel Clarke, which is extremely well worth the attention of every man, who is in any respect the sufferer for the sake of a good conscience.

the word of the Most High. Besides, God can do as well without my labours as with them. And if he should think proper, by this step to cast me quite aside, as a broken vessel no longer of use, I will endeavour to acquiesce in the Divine determination.

“God doth not need

Either man's work or his own gifts; who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best: his state
Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve, who only stand and wait.”

If the church of England retains much of the spirit, and some of the superstitions of the church of Rome,* what is a conscientious man to do, and how is he to act, under such a persuasion? Let any person weigh thoroughly the meaning of the following declarations, and then let him say in what manner I ought to act:—And the third Angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.*
Rev. xiv. 9—11.

* The late Lord Chatham, in a celebrated speech, which he made in the house of Lords, in favour of the Dissenters, said,—“We have a Popish liturgy, a Calvinistic creed, and an Arminian clergy.”

† Dr. Doddridge observes on this paragraph of scripture,—“When I seriously reflect on this text, and how directly the force of it lies against those, who, contrary to the light of their consciences, continue in the communion of the church of Rome, for secular advantage, or to avoid the terror of persecution, it almost makes me tremble; and I heartily wish, that all others, who connive at those things in the discipline and worship of Protestant churches, which they in their consciences think to be sinful remains of Popish superstition and corruption, would seriously attend to this passage, which is one of the most dreadful of the whole book of God, and weigh its awful contents, that they may keep at the

Are not these words enough to make the hair “stand on end like quills upon the fretful porcupine?” We all read them, and have read them many times for many years, and yet, from our general conduct, it would seem that no such passage might be found in the Sacred Writings. We Protestants are almost universally of opinion, that they apply directly to the members of the church of Rome. The members of that church read them as well as we Protestants, and yet we hardly ever hear of a Catholic becoming a Protestant, any more than of a Jew becoming a Christian. They have eyes, and see not; ears, and hear not; hearts, and understand not. The Lord, in judgment, hath sent them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie. The words are extremely plain, and inexpressibly alarming; but the force of them is always evaded, by applying them to any thing, rather than to their own church.—We Protestants too read them, and make ourselves easy under the awful denunciation, by applying them exclusively to the church of Rome; never dreaming, that they are, at least, in a secondary sense, equally applicable, not only to the English, but to every church establishment in Christendom, which retains any of the marks of the beast. To me this admits of no doubt. If I am mistaken, it is my very great misfortune.—My judgment has not been biased by interest, by connections, by inclination, or by any human considerations whatever. I have thought much upon the subject; read on both sides of the question whatever has fallen in my way; conversed with various persons for the sake of information; suffered the matter to rest upon my mind for some years undetermined; have never made my fears, suspicions, and dissatisfaction known to any man; and now, when I bring near to myself the thought of quitting one of the most commodious churches in the kingdom, erected on purpose for my own ministrations; leaving interred by it many a precious deposit, who will, I trust, be my joy and crown in the great day of the Lord Jesus, besides a mother, a wife, two children, and a sister; and giving up various kind friends whom I love as my own soul, together with a large body of people, that, if it were possible, would have plucked out their own eyes, and have given them to me:

greatest possible distance from this horrible curse, which is sufficient to make the ears of every one that hears it to tingle.”

—What shall I say?—All that is affectionate within me recoils. I am torn with conflicting passions; and am ready to say with the Apostle, I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my friends and brethren, whom I love in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

But then, various passages of Scripture—(ill understood, some will say)—urge me on the most momentous considerations, to renounce a situation, which I cannot any longer retain with peace of mind. Perhaps it is my own fault; certainly it is my very heavy misfortune. I bewail it exceedingly. I have received no affront; conceived no disgust; formed no plans; made no connections; consulted no friends; experience no weariness of the ministerial office; the ways of religion are still pleasant; I have been glad when duty called me to the house of God; his word hath been delightful; the pulpit has been awfully pleasing; the table of the Lord hath been the joy of my heart, and now that Providence calleth me away, with some degree of reluctance it is that I say, Lord, here I am. Do with me what seemeth thee good. Let me stay where I am. I gladly stay. Send me where thou wilt, I will endeavour to submit. Only go with me, and thy pleasure shall be mine.

“I argue not
Against Heav’n’s hand or will, nor bate a jot
Of heart or hope; but still bear up and steer
Right onward.”

ADDENDA ET CORRIGENDA.

GRAY is spoken of in the 61st page as a believer, and on the 300th page, as a deist. His character seems to have been ambiguous. He was an ingenious, but whimsical man, yet a poet of no ordinary rank.

The Methodists are mentioned in several parts of the foregoing pages: particularly on the 72d there is a general account of the state of their societies. I add here, that Aikin in his *Tour through North Wales*, page 184th, has paid that body of people a very high compliment. Nor has Mr. Paley done less in his *Evidences*, vol. i. page 38th, where he says—"After men became Christians, much of their time was spent in prayer and devotion, in religious meetings, in celebrating the eucharist, in conferences, in exhortations, in preaching, in an affectionate intercourse with one another, and correspondence with other societies. Perhaps their mode of life, in its form and habit, was not very unlike the *Unitas Fratrum*, or of modern Methodists."

Mr. Cecil, in his pleasing *Memoirs of the honourable and reverend W. B. Cadogan*, pp. 29—36, has given a pretty fair account of this body of people, which is every where spoken against, and has honestly and ably defended them from the obloquy which is usually cast upon all seriously religious characters by the world. The single circumstance, of their being generally, I might almost say universally, reviled and abused by all other denominations of professing Christians, is to me a certain sign, that there is something peculiarly good and excellent among them. The criterion whereby to judge, which our Saviour has given us, is, If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. *John xv. 19.*

It is said, on the 142d page, that "the very last improvements which took place in our ecclesiastical frame of things, were in the reign of James I."

This is not, strictly speaking, true. There were some few useful alterations and additions made in our public forms of worship during the reign of Charles II. which should have been noticed in their place, but which were overlooked there.

On the 150th page, it is said, "Every young man, without exception, subscribes, when he becomes a member of either of our English universities, he believes from his soul *ex animo*. that every thing contained in the Articles, Homilies, Common Prayer, and Offices of Ordination, is agreeable to the Word of God."

This assertion too is not accurate. Some alterations took place in this respect at Cambridge upwards of twenty years ago. But in Oxford, subscription continues as it was, I believe, to this day. Every person there, who has attained the age of twelve years, subscribes the Articles of Faith and Religion, when he is matriculated.

Page 151, line 2. "Spiritual courts,"—add the words of Bishop Burnet, who was well acquainted with these matters. And be it remembered, that every Bishop in England and Ireland has a Court of this description; and that the less true religion prevails in any diocese, the greater and more frequent are the abuses of these Courts.—The Bishop's words are: "As for the Ecclesiastical jurisdiction, it has been the burden of my life to see how it was administered: our Courts are managed under the rules of the Canon Law, dilatory and expensive; and as their constitution is bad, so the business in them is small: and therefore all possible contrivances are used, to make the most of those causes that come before them; so that they are universally dreaded and hated."—Conclusion of the Hist. of his Own Times.

Before the reader too severely condemns the author of this Plea for Religion, because of his leaving the Church, and the various reflections he has made upon the Bishops and Clergy; he requests that this work of the good Bishop, namely, the Conclusion of the History of his Own Times, may be thoroughly read and considered. The Bishops and Clergy of the land should be extremely familiar both with that and his admirable little book on the Pastoral Care. It is high time to awake out of sleep.

The number of persons who declined officiating in the Church of England, upon the conditions required, in the 17th

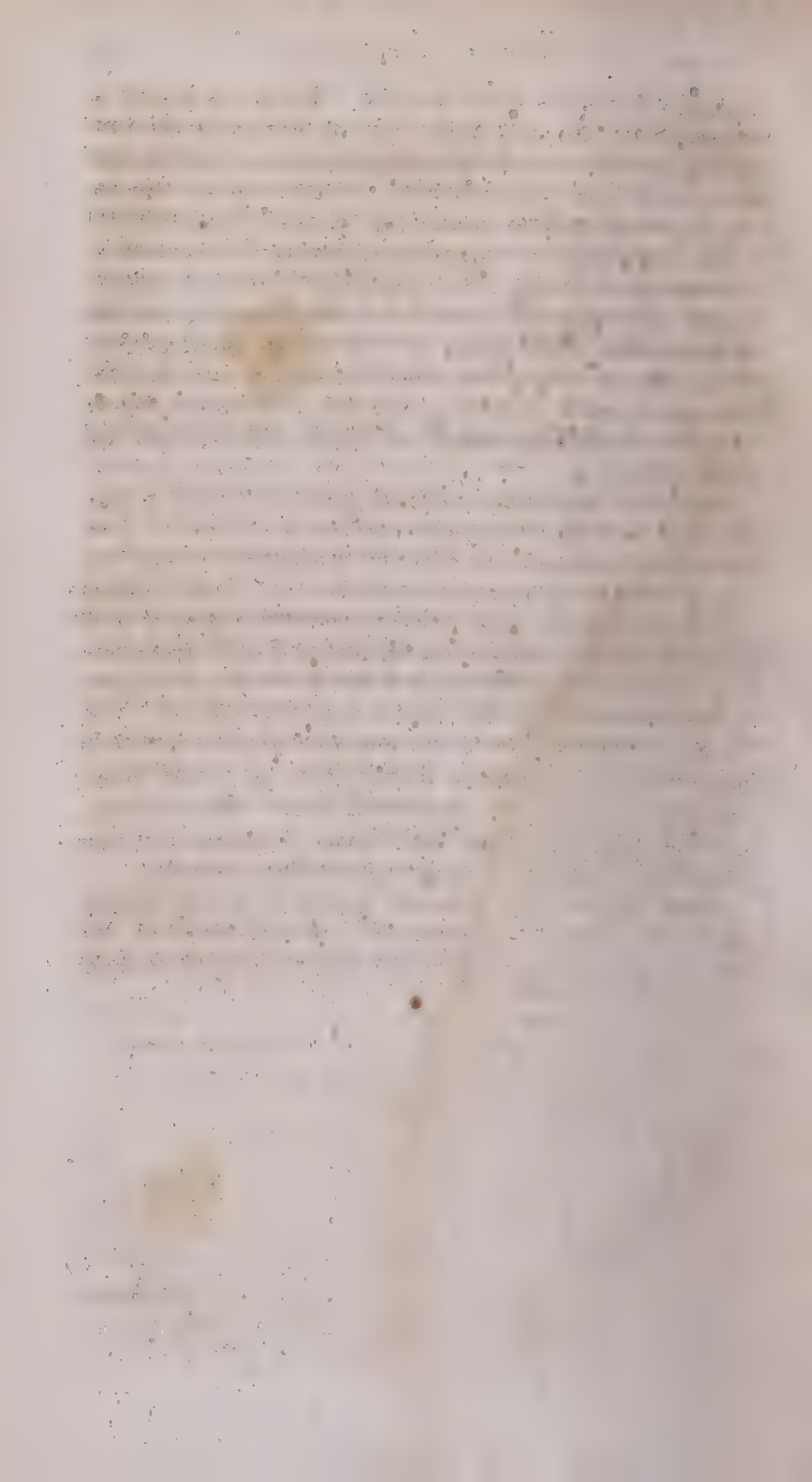
century, was upwards of two thousand. Milton was brought up and sent to the university with a view to the Church; but when he came seriously to consider the conditions upon which he must enter, he declined the sacred office. "To the church," says he, "by the intentions of my parents and friends, I was destined of a child, and in mine own resolutions, till coming to some maturity of years, and perceiving what tyranny had invaded the church, that he who would take orders must subscribe, slave, and take an oath withal; which unless he took with a conscience that would retch, he must either straight perjure, or split his faith; I thought it better to prefer a blameless silence before the sacred office of speaking, bought and begun with servitude and forswearing."

There have been some respectable persons in our own day, who have declined entering into the Church of England, from objections entertained to our oaths and subscriptions; others have complied with all our forms and ceremonies, but have been obliged to strain and shuffle, and have never known what peace of mind and good conscience afterwards meant; and several others have been so pressed and wounded in their minds, that they have given up their situations, after they have been already ordained. The late Mr. Archdeacon Blackburne was never properly at rest in his spirit; the present Dean Tucker gives up several things among us as wrong; Dr. Robertson, Messrs. Dyer, Evanson, and Wakefield, all resigned their letters of orders; or at least have ceased to officiate as ministers in the Establishment.

There may be other mistakes in point of fact or history, which have escaped my observation. If such should be discovered, by any friendly hand, they shall be acknowledged and corrected.

THE END.

Y y



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